catchment area of the port was extended to include most of the east and centre of the island.

The decline in indigenously rooted economic activity is typified by the fortunes of the cotton industry, which after two millennia of regional fame finally succumbed to the stresses of the new world into which Malta had been introduced. Statistical information is limited to brief mention of employment in the industry in the Census Reports of 1851 and later. General material, often untrustworthy, may be gleaned from travellers reports. Field work (18) carried out during the last four years has given us the evidence of the few surviving cotton workers who can recall the character of the industry as it was in its moribund latter days.

In 1861 there still remained almost 9,000 workers occupationally described as spinners and weavers and some 200 beaters and dyers. Ninety-six per cent. of the total were women, and male labour was generally used only in the final stages of cloth preparation. The industry included all processes from the growing of indigenous short staple annual cottons to the manufacture of cloth. The actual operations however were carried out almost entirely by individual workers in their own homes and were linked only by merchants specialising in this trade. In many cases merchants advanced seed to the farmers on a crop-sharing basis. In all cases they bought the picked lint and then distributed quantities by weight to 'out-work' spinners. These would return the yarn, which had been prepared by primitive traditional teasers and spinning wheels, and were paid by weight and fineness of the yarn. The village merchant would store the yarn until he received an order for cloth and would then make similar contracts with domestic weavers.

That this type of 'out-work', domestic industry survived late into the nineteenth century is a commentary on the social and economic needs of the poorer village and rural classes. Much of the female labour described as occupied in cotton-working was often only seasonally thus employed. The 1861 census taken in the autumn in contrast to the usual spring period clearly illustrates the seasonal change of work between spring harvesting and tillage in the fields, and the home use of the spinning wheel after the autumnal harvest. Tariffs and quotas on trade in lint and yarn were deliberately employed to protect in the domestic market this last employment reserve of the 'lower classes'.

Finally however tradition and protection proved powerless to prevent change. In the harbour area the decline was rapid after 1851, alternative employment and the impact of trade virtually killing the indigenous cotton industry by 1901. Away from the conurbation the same factors operated more slowly but still inexorably. Żebbuġ and Rabat, centres of old Malta, were the last to succumb. The former, a great centre of mercantile and ecclesiastical wealth derived from cotton, remained relatively important for weaving until 1914. In Rabat, the suburb of the old capital, a craft industry still survives. With the coming of new opportunities for wealth gaining, not in trade but in mass employment in the dockyards and towns, the last *raison d'être* of the cotton industry disappeared. It survived longest in the cotton growing regions of the west and in the most Maltese of the old villages of the Centre and South. With its disappearance died the last considerable skilled employment of traditional resource wealth.

Changes such as these characterised the Maltese economy during the nineteenth century. World War I marked the end of an epoch during which the evaluation placed on Malta by Britain was sometimes questioned but never invalidated. The Maltese economy as it existed in the opening years of the twentieth century had reached the logical culmination of a specialised development which had been under way for centuries.

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For brevity's sake it must suffice to say here that, apart from the obvious effects of World War II, the Maltese economy during the last 50 years has developed along more or less uniform general lines. Trade statistics began to be compiled properly in 1909-10. By 1918, visible exports paid for only 10 per cent. of all imports while by 1956 this proportion had dropped to 5 per cent. For our present purpose the most recent specifically economic Report utilising normally unpublished source material, that of Balogh and Seers (13), may be used as a basis for discussion. Statistics for the year 1953-54 contained therein and in the original source material are here re-assembled and re-arranged in the same combinations used in Chapter V A, i.e. Negotiable Income or External Economic Balance, Internal Revenue and National Product. By no means all the facts are available and some of the elements in the computation are open to question, but this particular presentation has been adopted to bring out significant points of direct relevance to our work.

The first element, that of External Balance may be presented in tabular form thus:-

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Table 31. External economic balance. 1954.

A. Negotiable Income - originating externally.		
(i) Services pay	£6.5 millions	
(of which dockyard)	£3.6	"
(ii) Direct expenditure by Services	2.2	"
(iii) Estimated spending by non-Maltese Service personnel	6.0	"
	£14.7	"
(iv) Imperial Grants	3.0	"
	£17.7	"
B. Negotiable Income - originating internally.		
(i) Merchandise exports	£1.5 millions	
(ii) Invisible exports	2.9	"
	£4.4	"
C. Negotiable Income - Grand Total	£22.1 millions	
D. Expenditure on imports.		
(i) Merchandise imports	£18.6 millions	
(ii) Invisible imports	1.9	"
	£20.5	"

The most obvious characteristic of Malta's economy in its external relationship is its amazing dependence for Negotiable Income, i.e. convertible wealth available for paying for imports, on factors outside domestic control.

In detail various significant points emerge. While part of this income resulted from the provision of industrial and labour services - A (i) and (ii), about 40 per cent. came through retail and domestic services to the Garrison - A (iii). Statistically, this is an item impossible to measure precisely, and in so far as it is a residual item a further question arises, to wit, how far may it be an over-estimate concealing an unrecorded inflow of foreign wealth through hidden channels to the civil population. In Sierra Leone, periodic upsurges of

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is uneasily superimposed on the traditional pattern. The part played by the Church during the 1956 Referendum on integration with the United Kingdom was most complicated. During the disturbances following the breakdown of Government in the spring of 1958, town and country, proletariat and bourgeoisie, Maltese Malta and Latinised Malta, all reacted differently. Over all responsible actions looms the knowledge that Malta is not a viable independency (4).

As we have seen, education and language have been inextricably involved in politics (5). More directly important is the educational effect on the people as a whole of the system of public instruction. Under the leadership of Dr. Albert Laferla public education became vastly improved in all ways (6), and from his tutelage, more particularly after the Compulsory Attendance Act of 1924, came the generation of Maltese which now forms economically and socially the most important part of the population. After 1933, Italian ceased to be used as a medium of instruction, a standard Maltese orthography came into use (7), and the school system was expanded to meet the most obvious and immediate needs. Education was sadly disrupted by World War II but since that time has continued to improve in quality and range of facilities (8). Compulsory Education as distinct from compulsory attendance came into force in 1946, and in 1955 full-time education became the rule. Some 22 per cent. of children of school age still receive education in private, usually Church run, schools.

It is vital to realise the extent of the social and economic revolution implied in these developments. In the rural areas the change has been one from illiteracy to education within one generation. Even in the towns, and this is particularly true for the new growths associated with dockyard, manufacturing and service industry employment, thoughts and activities are being fundamentally affected by education for the first time in Maltese history. Contrasts between the levels of awareness of the value of formal education are considerable, and the full impact of technical education has yet to be felt - the first Government Technical School was opened in 1934. The chief contrast observable in the field however is between the two age groups, over and under 30 to 35 years of age. The former still contains many illiterate and therefore conservative people; the latter by reason of training as well as age is radical and impatient. The latter attitude is largely responsible for the drift from the land which encourages the domination of agriculture by residual conservatism.

In the field of public health, skeletal public works services had been constructed before World War I. Recent developments may be regarded as logical extensions both in the sector of public works and in the field of medicine. As late as 1936 the judgment of the Chief Government Medical Officer was 'no scheme of sanitary reform ever met with greater opposition than the establishment of the modern sewer system in Malta' (9), but by 1955, about 270,000 or over 90 per cent. of the Maltese population lived in sewered dwellings, Żurrieq alone among the large villages remaining unserved. In parts of the countryside and in the smaller villages, dispersion of settlement renders prohibitive the cost of connection of each dwelling with the public sewers. The more isolated and the more rural areas are now the regions of lowest standards (Fig. 33).

Medical services, particularly in their relevance to the problem of high infant mortality, developed late and slowly (10). The most serious obstacles were those rooted in Maltese social life (11). The strength of the matriarchal tradition in Maltese household has meant that the ignorance of the oldest generation persists in imposing itself on the life of the youngest. Dirt, overclothing and under-feeding, the indiscriminate and early use of farinaceous foods, all these were difficult to eradicate in overcrowded and grandmother-dominated conditions (12). The difficulty of educating in hygiene and personal health an indifferent and tradition-bound population proved insuperable and in 1939 the infantile mortality rate was as high as the average for the preceding 20 years.

The final breakthrough occurred paradoxically during World War II. In 1943 and 1944 housing conditions and diet were worse than any experienced in peacetime but the death rate and the infantile mortality rate began to fall to record

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low levels. Earlier improvements probably supplied the basis for change but more important was the fact that, for the first time, the effective Garrison of Malta included the whole population. The new machinery for public information, the desperate need for reducing disease incidence and preventing epidemics, and even food rationing and shortage had cumulatively beneficial effects on the public mind. More than all, it would seem, the military control of the besieged islands with its conscription of many Maltese males and the increased contact of British troops with the people, together with that strange uniting exaltation in face of danger observed in other countries, all shocked Malta into new ways of thought (Fig. 66).

After the war this momentum was maintained during the period of reconstruction. The Malta Memorial District Nursing Association, Child Health Clinics, and U.N.-established ante-natal clinics have now been accepted and their services utilised. In 1959 the infantile mortality rate was 34.7 per 1,000, leaving the memory of the rate of 350 per 1,000 in 1942 far behind.

This revolutionary change is of particular revelance to this study. Many of its implications need no labouring. The demographic consequences, for instance, are obvious enough, as also the slowness with which traditional ways of life in Malta have changed. For us the most important consequence is that rising generations through a new awareness of causation and consequence, of scientific processes, are becoming vulnerable to new ideas in associated fields. There are no great steps between preventive human medicine, inoculation, livestock injections and an appreciation of plant pathology. One difficulty remains; the rural areas are the least affected by these recent changes and those individuals in the countryside who are mentally injected with new ideas and understanding are, for various reasons, the least likely to remain in agriculture.

Exemplifying this continuing regional dichotomy, but unity in complexity, is the recent history of milk consumption and production (13). Traditionally in Malta, 'the entire milk supply has been delivered by the goat herself' (14). Sometimes living with their flocks in the *fossa* which surround Valletta, the herdsmen would wander the streets, milking the animals on demand. Bruce and Zammit in 1885 and 1905 showed that the bacillus of Undulant or Malta Fever was freely excreted in goats milk and that the high incidence in Malta of this debilitating, sometimes lethal, disease was a natural consequence of the general albeit low per capita consumption of fresh milk from predominantly diseased goats. After considerable investigation, a milk pasteurising plant was erected and the first pasteurised milk was distributed, Valletta, Floriana and Sliema being declared 'closed areas' within which the sale of raw milk became illegal. During World War II, further extension of this policy was prevented but, since most goats were slaughtered for meat because of fodder shortage and because consumption of tinned milk became normal, the incidence of Malta fever fell to record low levels. Post-war revival in goats' milk production resulted in general re-infection by brucellosis and in 1946 the incidence of undulant fever was the highest ever recorded. During the post-war period public health and welfare policies have encouraged the consumption of milk. Because of the incidence of Malta fever, this has entailed the provision of expensive pasteurising plant, the prevention of the sale of unpasteurised, and the official encouragement of production of cows' rather than goats' milk.

This particular development is examined at greater length in Chapter X but some main points of general import merit consideration here. First, Maltese society has recently been affected by social, dietetic and medical policies which profoundly affect the basis of social life. In general one might say that the Maltese way of life is being made more remote from the simple crudities of parochial experience. Secondly, in the field of health and social welfare, the criterion of scientifically measured need has been adopted as the basis of official policy and the question of availability of resources is regarded as of secondary importance. Thirdly, this increasing social sophistication has only very recently become operative in Maltese life and different scales of value exist in different generations and in different social groups. Lastly, it would be fair to say that, while the urban markets are still only relatively fastidious

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about quality and as yet incompletely dominated by ideas of welfare economics, the rural community is far less affected by change. While milk consumers in the towns are often either not completely convinced of the need for milk processing or at the other extreme will use only imported tinned milk where possible, the producers are generally even less convinced of the need for care in the production of clean milk. Unpasteurised goats' milk is still generally used in those farming households where milk is consumed at all, and understanding of the processes of infection is but slowly growing. Thus, in the field of public health and personal hygiene and medical care, social changes have been rapid, recent and uneven in incidence. Here, as in the economic sector, the mental acceptance of new ideas is not yet complete and is least advanced in the most rural and remote regions.

The examination already made of the demographic situation in the Maltese Islands needs some brief consideration against the background of social attitudes. The consensus of expert opinion is that in developing societies a falling birth rate is the result not of an actual decline in fertility but of family limitation. In most regions such a decline in family size is associated with changed social attitudes, which have become accepted in many countries in which Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion. Pope Pius XII himself condemned irresponsible parenthood and said it is 'a mistake and a departure from moral truth to exalt too highly the generative function even in its right moral setting of married life' (15).

The insularity and historical experience of Malta have preserved there a more rigid and strict application of Catholic rules of conduct, in which, despite the inadequacy of the Islands' resources to provide for the economic welfare of the population, the virtues of the large family are still stressed. Archbishop Gonzi in 1958 reminded an audience of young people that, although large families entailed much sacrifice on the part of the parents, parents should be prepared for a life of sacrifice (16). Father Vella, the founder of the Cana movement has said: 'One of Malta's glories is her large families' (17).

In Malta therefore the weight of the Church tends to discourage the secular social trend towards smaller families, and still makes illegal any provision for family limitation. Where secularism is strongest, in the urban cosmopolis, family size declines most rapidly. In the rural communities, where the precepts of the Church are most conscientiously observed and where the effect of secular socio-economic desires is most restricted, large families are normal and admired.

This regional contrast in social behaviour, when superimposed upon purely demographic variations in rates of population growth, becomes sometimes emphasised and sometimes negated. In the northern third of Malta, inward internal movement as a consequence of 'pioneer' agricultural settlement during and after the mid-nineteenth century produced a 'young' population, high birth rates and rates of natural increase. This region has remained almost entirely rural in social character. The second main region of inward movement of population, the suburban area, has experienced a recent decline in the early high birth rates as a result of the impact of secular ideas.

The urban heart of Malta in Valletta and Floriana by contrast, has been both traditionally a zone of outward movement of population and the district most affected by changes in social attitudes to family propagation. The remaining area, the heart and core of Maltese 'casal' life, illustrates clearly the delicate balance between demographic and religious and secular social influences. From this central area have traditionally gone the migrants to the new towns and the 'new' northern farming areas. The efflux has counteracted the traditionally rural and strongly religious tendency towards large families and a high rate of natural increase. On the southern fringe of this zone however lies the Żurrieq group of 'casals' and villages. From this until recently relatively isolated district, emigration has never been high and, with a survival of traditional rural values, this region has had in the 1950's the consistently highest birth rates - over 30 per 1,000 - of the *Maltese* population.

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As has already appeared it is impossible to live and work in Malta without becoming very much aware of the strength of the Church. We venture therefore to make some necessary comment on this at once most delicate and yet most vigorous aspect of Maltese affairs. 175 179

As noted in Chapter IV, religious activity of a highly developed and institutionalised nature was a feature of Malta even in prehistory. Little direct evidence is available of this facet of life in the semitic or classical cultures, and even when we come to the Christian era and St. Paul's shipwreck 'on an island called Melita' we have no conclusive evidence that this in fact was Malta, or that St. Paul introduced Christianity to the Islands (18).

At all events the Christian Church entered the Islands in Roman times, and the line of bishops regarded as beginning with Publius, St. Paul's host, although broken during the period of Arab rule, was re-established by the Normans. As examined in Chapter IV, from this time onward Malta became first a simple fief in Christendom and then its bastion, held by a Religious Order. Whatever toleration there may once have been between Christian and Moslem before 1530 was quickly erased.

The report by the Apostolic Visitor, Mgr. Pietro Duzina (19) of his visit to Malta in 1575 throws some light on the condition of the Church at the time. In answer to unorthodoxy a Holy Tribunal of the Inquisition was established, creating three rival forces in the Islands, the Grand Master, the Inquisitor and the Bishop. From Duzina's report and subsequent accounts we see that not until the Turkish threat in 1565 had been repulsed and the Visitor's instructions for future conduct had had some effect, did village life become centred around new and magnificent churches which replaced the smaller more humble edifices in the hamlets. Curia and architectural evidence (20) corroborate each other. From this time onward, the parishes, growing in number, became the administrative and social regional units that counted in Maltese life and the Parish Church became the focus of the religious, social, and economic life of the casals and villages. As patrons of all the arts, repositories of wealth, directors not only of consciences but all conscious action, the Parish organisations became, and to an amazing extent still retain, a permeating power. Quite apart from the regular clergy the Religious Orders have played an important part in the Maltese Church and in education and other aspects of social activity. The relationship between the Church and the Order of St. John was not always completely amicable. In the traditional village scene the village priest, in the virtual absence of an indigenous squirearchy, was the teacher, doctor, legal advisor as well as spiritual mentor. Compared with this the Knights were alien and apart from Maltese life. The position of the Church and the Order vis-a-vis the Papacy was also not completely easy. Nevertheless, mainly as a result of mutual non-interference, the Church gained complete local ascendancy.

During the nineteenth century an uneasy *modus vivendi* was established between the Church and the new non-Catholic rulers, and during most of the conflict over language and culture the Church played a pacific and calming role, concerning itself mainly with the administrative details necessitated by the rapidly increasing and nucleating population. How far the dependence of the individual on the spirit and dogma of his belief, the faith described in 1840 by Miège (21) as '*cette piété poussé jusqu'au fanatisme*', has been supported by the long years of insecurity during which Divine and ecclesiastical protection was felt as a real and precious thing, it is hard to say. One may speculate on the fact that it was at the old 'frontier' casal at Mosta, westernmost of the old settlements, that local piety built in days of security the vast church with a dome that ranks among the largest of the world. It is also true that the Maltese Church enforces more strict rules of conduct upon its people than other Churches now find possible.

However we may interpret the situation, the Church which succeeded in adjusting itself to nineteenth century changes has been faced in the twentieth with the consequences of those changes. The traditional society in which it was virtually omnipotent and omnipresent is changing into a new society in which the individual does not have to lean so much on the priest. Now, the younger genera- 178 179

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tion can read, travel and make contact directly and vicariously with the world outside. Emigration too has tested the strength of the Faith. In consequence, we can now find in Malta a historical cross-section represented in spatial distribution. At one extreme one can meet in Sliema agnostic Maltese who never go near a church; at the other, in rural Gozo, one can find general obedience to the Bishop's instructions. All societies are heterogeneous in this respect but in Malta the strain of division within society is particularly great because of the existence of so many other cleavages. The reaction of the Church to this new situation has been dual in character. In the first place the Church itself has taken official action. Reform and correction, the imposition of rigorous film and book censorship, the series of edicts on dress and on behaviour have accompanied research, such as that of Abbé Houtart (22), into the needs of the people. Secondly, there have appeared the lay organisations with the avowed intent of redressing the balance. M.U.S.E.U.M. and Catholic Action before World War II, Cana, Legion of Mary, Social Action, the Holy Name Society and many others of foreign and indigenous origin since 1945 have developed in the conurbation where the challenge to the Church was strongest (23).

Financially the Church is still strong, owning as it does some 19 per cent. of the agricultural land of the Islands and an unverifiable total of urban property (24). Politically, the strength of the Church rests on its hold over the minds and hearts of the people. It is not necessary for the Church to take much overt action to demonstrate its power.

As a last vignette of the changing Maltese socio-economic complex we may consider some aspects of recent research on a useful indicator of social change, the bread baking industry (25).

The purchasing, distribution and processing of wheat and wheat flour, remains as it has been for centuries, Government controlled. When the Knights established their capital at Valletta and when the suburb-outwork of Floriana was built, great stone-chamber granaries were hewn out of the solid rock, developed versions of the much older 'bell-pits'. These underground granaries were stocked by the official organisation, the *Universita*, and the grain periodically distributed at controlled prices. This siege-system, necessitated by dependence on imports, was abolished in the early nineteenth century, and the newly established Board of Trade contented itself with licensing importations. As a measure of agricultural protection and for the raising of revenue, duties were levied on these shipments. During the twentieth century, and culminating in the emergency measures of the beleaguered Islands during World War II, controls became tighter and grain prices heavily subsidised.

During the period of urbanisation and more especially during the last siege the general practice of home baking rapidly declined in Malta, although in Gozo it still persists. In the latter island there was in 1957 only one full-time and one part-time commercial bakery, while in Malta there were 201. All food grains produced for sale in the Island should legally be sent to licensed flour mills for blending. Imports, almost entirely of hard Canadian grain, are made by the Department of Trade and by the Victualling Yard in H.M. Dockyard. Ninety-seven per cent. of all flour issued for ration-bread making is subsidised, but local estimates suggest that up to 50 per cent. is used for making other products, this illegally used flour being sold at a discount.

Fig. 67 shows the distribution of bakeries in Malta, their importance and the main distribution areas as they existed in 1957. Only two villages in 1950 and one in 1957 - Safi - did not possess their own bakeries. This however is not indicative of closed fields of distribution but only of the multiplicity and the small-scale of the enterprises. Of the 35 districts, 32 imported bread from and 17 exported bread to other areas. Over half the 15,000 bags of subsidised flour issued in 1950 eventually found their way as bread outside the receiving districts. Of this inter-regional trade, Qormi supplied almost 80 per cent. Very briefly the points of interest are as follows. Qormi, which in 1957 had 48 bakeries, has always been the traditional baking centre, partly because of its central situation, but mainly as noted in Chapter VIII because of its situation in

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a dry-farming cereal region. The other main centres are of more recent growth and reflect a variety of factors, Mosta as a regional centre, Gżira and Msida as suitably placed coastal sites within the conurbation. Secondly, the distribution of bakeries does not correspond directly with variations in population density but rather reflects those variations in an exaggerated form. If we omit Qormi from consideration, Fig. 67 indicates fairly accurately the strength or weakness of traditional society in inverse ratio to the strength of commercial bakery development. Thirdly, the inter-regional 'trade' in bread, together with evidence we have no space to consider such as the development of travelling shops, etc., shows the importance of the new mobility which is rapidly breaking down old parochialisms. Uniformity, homogeneity, openness to world ideas, these are the social virtues lauded in the twentieth century, which are being inculcated in Malta most effectively by the delivery vans of the new commercialism. The decline of local individualisms is aesthetically sad; it is also dangerous in that the smoother the appearance of the social emulsion the less heed is paid to the degree of real cohesion between its members.

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24. see Chapter IX.
25. CHARLTON, W. A.: *op. cit.*

per cent. are children under 14 years of age. The number of whole-time farmers, 8,100, is now smaller than the group of part-time agriculturalists - 8,946, and in its age-composition differs significantly from the total population - 48 per cent. are aged 50 years or more (1948 - 33.8 per cent.) as compared with 31 per cent. for the Islands as a whole.

The relatively small and, until very recently, declining size of the full-time farming population, and its rapid ageing, suggest a decline in the importance and status of agriculture. The implications of these figures are discussed elsewhere but it is worth noting that the agricultural areas are still inhabited by over 126,000 persons most of whom draw some real income from the land in amounts which may often be small per capita but which observation suggests are large in total.

The total value of the recorded crop product is estimated at some £2.27 millions. From observation in Malta and experience elsewhere one can suggest that is under-estimated by a fraction of the order of 10 per cent. (See p. 10,- Essential Statistics - for further information.)

The combined value of crop and livestock products is estimated at almost £6,000,000. The income accruing to the cultivators is distributed in such a multiplicity of ways in such varying amounts that no useful estimate of average per capita income can be made. Of the disbursements of some £3 millions, an amount of the order of £2½ millions is expended on imports, notably of fodder and store cattle. Earnings of foreign currency amount to approximately £500,000, almost half of which derived from potato exports. This imbalance between imports and exports in the agricultural sector appears even more striking when one remembers that F.D.T. imports of over £9,000,000 make up 35 per cent. of the total Maltese import bill.

The efforts of the 9 per cent. of the employed population engaged in agriculture are already considerable but the needs of Malta are great. With no known physical resources of any size other than the land, it becomes of vital importance that farming productivity should be raised even further and that special effort is directed towards a legitimate degree of self-sufficiency in agricultural products. Much of the analysis that follows this introduction must be considered in the light of present and future needs.

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marriage (60 per cent. of the total), but there are now a greater number of family members interested in land - 31 in all, though only 22 have holdings of a size likely to produce an adequate family income. The net per capita change over the generation is a significant reduction in the area added, especially in the area added by new tenancies which in generation III resulted in an increase of 93½ *imiet*. Further, the increase indicated in Table 47 is significantly influenced by a tenement newly entered by one member of the family (2130) which, in one large block of land, amounted to 28½ *imiet*. All other new tenancies were relatively small pieces of land. The same applies, in fact, to all the land added at this time and, while land held by the family is gradually becoming an increasingly significant proportion of the total land in the locality, the outer spatial limit of new acquisitions is becoming increasingly wider (Fig. 139).

Naturally, generation V, some of whom are still babes-in-arms, has not yet been long enough active in the field for any clear patterns to show, but some transfers of land have take place. There does however seem to be evidence of an increasing proportion of children receiving only small garden plots from their parents, their major source of income being clearly outside farming. Throughout the period considered, 'garden land' of this sort has increased, though the pattern is obscured by overlapping generations (*e.g.* group C, generation III was somewhat younger and therefore later developing than other groups).

In the foregoing section, the landholding history of a family has been examined in historical depth. Both the methods of acquiring new land and the means of sub-dividing land already held are seen to result in more scattered and smaller plots. Although all children have pre-emptions to their parents' land, by no means all such rights are in fact taken up. In general, sons receive more land than daughters, while dowry land, so-called, is seen to have rather a more special function than that term implies. Although the availability of land has varied from period to period, energetic individuals seem always to have been able to build up their holdings to a viable size, partly perhaps by judicious choice of a marriage partner. Nevertheless, since c. 1870 there has been a general decrease in the size of farm.

Much of this evidence confirms and in part explains the trends observed in the general statistical material and the study of the Żebbuġ-Siġġiewi area. The legal evidence, which as was shown earlier allowed for the possibility of extreme sub-division, is only relevant so far as individuals and economic conditions enforce such extremes. In so far as law and custom support the maintenance of a family's control over land, field evidence suggests that law and custom prevail, for very little land entering the family is subsequently lost. On the other hand, attempts to sub-let outside a family group are seen again and again to result in forfeiture of land which our expanding family were quick to seize upon.

In conclusion, it must be pointed out that, although fragmentation has not proceeded to a degree made possible in law, it has developed with fair rapidity during the period of this survey. Had fragmentation proceeded everywhere in the Island at the same speed in longer-established farming families, it would certainly have reached a more critical phase than it patently has. There seem to be three possible explanations of this apparent contradiction. Firstly there may have been some factor, as yet unknown, which inhibited considerable general fragmentation and which ceased to operate as from 70 or 80 years ago. The nineteenth century development of Government Lands, or some element in the emigrating pattern may be involved. Secondly, there may be a socio-economic limit to the process which our family has just reached, bringing it into line with conditions in older families - extensive inter-marriage may be a factor here. Or finally, there may be special forces within a developing family unit, perhaps not unrelated to the spirit of determination which led 0 and his sons with little capital to take upon themselves the task of restoring 100 *imiet* of storm-ravaged land, which would not apply to other groups. Certainly some individual members of the family studied display a peasant-like devotion to the soil which is becoming increasingly rare in Malta.

for wind breaks, covered forcing beds, crop supports, etc. Livestock harness is simple in type consisting of head harness and collar. Working bullocks, now rarely used, are also equipped with collars for traction but the guiding reins are attached to the horns. Country carts are unsprung, wooden frames resting directly on the metal axles. That the ruggedness of their construction is only equalled by the toughness of the draught animals is evinced by their presence on places such as Dingli Undercliff, or the cliffsides of the Wied il-Luq (Buskett).

The solidly built stone huts or *orfa* that are to be found on most holdings may be regarded as part of the farmers' 'equipment' rather than his habitation. The simplest and most numerous are simple one-roomed cubes, some five yards square, strongly constructed, usually of worked stone blocks with wood and *torba* roofs. These 'blockhouses', for such they appear, serve as storehouses for implements and crops, for guns and birdcatching equipment, as well as for shelter during the 'siesta' hours and bad weather. Their cost in construction labour, and the pride that does into the simple furnishing of what is the farmers 'den', as well as the deceptive appearance of dispersed settlement that they give, suggests that further investigation into their origins might prove valuable. In general terms, they seem to be a natural response to the marked concentration of settlement in the casals. They are far less numerous in the western region of more recent and dispersed settlement. The larger, two-roomed and two-storied types are used mainly as summer working residences, when a whole family may move out of its casal to the main holding.

These implements and types of equipment are one facet of the complex of traditional cultivation techniques - techniques based on the intense and continuous application of uncosted hand labour. A brief examination of the working characteristics of some of the implements is a necessary introduction to a discussion of general cultivation techniques.

The *mohriet* (Plate XIX) is used as an animal-drawn hoe rather than as a plough proper. It is light and can be carried by the cultivator along narrow field paths and across rugged terrain. Its negotiability is limited only by the ease of access demanded by the draught animals. The 'rotavator' (Plate XX) alone of modern mechanical implements can rival it in this respect. On coarse soils, often only a few inches deep, cross tilling by hoe or *ard* seems perfectly satisfactory for tilth making. A vertically applied tool such as the true spade cannot be utilised in such soils, while all but the simplest mouldboard ploughs are too clumsy for use in small terraced fields. Both *ard* and hoe are used in garden rather than field style and their only disadvantages lie in the slowness of the work performed. Here lies the especial advantage of the rotavator that can, under reasonable conditions, be used for tilling six *tmien* of land a day as compared with about two or three for the *ard* and one for the hoe. (Figures are necessarily approximate averages.)

Cultivation techniques and the farming landscapes which they have produced are now in a critical stage of development. For millennia, a slowly increasing population has been utilising the natural land resources more and more intensively and also supplementing them by artificial works. Until the early nineteenth century, social and tenurial obstructions to full land use on the one hand, and wealth derived from the overseas possessions of the Knights of Malta on the other, little affected the basic land hunger of the rural community. During the period of British occupation, however, externally derived income has brought with it more and more non-agricultural activity. Opportunities for non-farm work have increased and so has socio-economic dissatisfaction with arduous and limited rural life. The stage has now been reached at which land reclamation and land abandonment, intensification of effort and neglect, are proceeding simultaneously. An examination of those landscape features which are products of farming techniques suggests that this stage is now critical.

Land reclamation and the extension of the cultivable area are still going on. At several points on the Delimara peninsula, material is being carried from the cliff foot and from old huts and dwellings and spread over the existing thin and discontinuous soil cover. On this, sulla as a soil building leguminous crop

[See page 306 -- Analyst]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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F. The Farmer in Maltese Rural Society

241 571 A study of the Maltese farmer within the total of agriculture in the Islands must include a consideration of the individual as a member of the community in which he lives, works and thinks.

The total social environment of the Maltese countryman may be seen as three concentric circles - family, village, and 'Malta'.

241 619 To the Gozitan who has never crossed the sea to Malta and to the old countryman for whom Valletta is a foreign world, the concept of 'Malta' is something large and indeterminate. But even for most of the rural population, for whom Valletta and the towns are becoming a familiar part of experience, the Islands are large enough for the countryman to feel none of the claustrophobia of which visitors to Malta complain. The 'National' unit is large enough for him to speak of *'Il-Gvern'* - the Government, of which he has heard frequently, though imprecisely, on all sides and on which he blames many of his economic and social problems with a characteristic disregard for logic or even fact. This concept of *Gvern* is of importance in an appreciation of rural thought in Malta. In it no very clear distinction is made between Maltese Government and the Imperial side of the Dyarchy. Neither is allegiance to one or other of the political parties very significant, for personality is always more important than party.

[178] To give an historical perspective to this attitude of the remoteness of *Gvern* one may see in it not only the product of foreign British rule since 1800 but also the legacy of the 'paternal' government of the Knights of St. John during their previous two and a half centuries in the Islands. Rural communities are characteristically conservative.

793 The other Malta-wide authority is that of the Church, but the summit of this is scarcely less remote to the individual than is *Gvern*. In the normal practice of his Religion the countryman leans directly on his local priests, though the Curia and Archbishop in Malta and the Bishop in Gozo do represent, for him, the essential unity that is the Maltese Church.

241 178 369 Within the framework of 'Malta' the distinction between the conurbation of towns, centred on Valletta, and the countryside is crucial. This 'conurbation' may be defined as those census districts with less than 3 per cent. of their working population engaged in farming. In 1948, this accounted for all districts bordering on either the Grand or Marsamxett Harbours together with the adjoining residential suburb of St. Julians (1). Outside this urban area, the farming element in the working population increases towards the west and north of Malta, although only in Mgarr does it pass 50 per cent. In Gozo, the scene is notably more 'rural', on the basis of this definition, with six of the 12 census districts having more than half their working population engaged in agriculture.

[463] A survey of parallel information in censuses over the past 100 years shows a declining farming element along with a diversification of the occupational structure - especially in those villages regarded as traditional strongholds of agriculture.

This trend to economic diversification has been accompanied by a break away from the former social homogeneity of these rural villages. In fact, economic and social change cannot be considered each in isolation. In Malta, change - in its widest sense - has spread into the countryside from the conurbation. The tempo of this process has accelerated rapidly since the 1939-45 war, which brought town and country together more than ever before and shook the foundations of the cleavage between 'peasant villager' and 'urban townsman', a key feature in the social geography of the Maltese Islands. The appearance of schools, amenities - particularly transport, and a degree of occupational choice, have enabled the countryman to sample a more 'urban' way of life and culture and this has produced a dissatisfaction with rural society as it has been. Maltese countrymen knew they were regarded, as a class, as low in the social scale of urban opinion. They accepted this fatalistically and were in fact able to view

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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their designation with a certain tolerant wisdom. Not so the present young generation in the farming community for whom education and material facilities have presented the chance of escape from a social inferiority complex. 178 241

The village was traditionally the community-group in rural Malta. Contact with the towns and Valletta was limited, especially for the villages of the west and in Gozo, until buses, press and rediffusion narrowed the gulf, but it was hardly less than the contacts between the villages themselves. The village was the group for most social interaction. Currently, the trend is towards a Malta-wide community-group in which villages are losing much of their isolation, although there is very little uniformity in this process. Sub-urban villages are clearly absorbing non-rural characteristics much more quickly than is the case in outlying parts of the Islands. 369 [628]

The nucleus of village life is the Church and the first citizen is the Parish Priest. The Priest combined teaching and general advisory duties with his spiritual role (see Chapter VI C). He was also the main link with the world outside the village through his relaying of general news from his pulpit. Normally, land transfers and a wide variety of matters connected with the agricultural cycle were announced by the Priest. The Church was the social meeting place and the basis of institutionalised activity. Even the village *festa*, that single day of wild exuberance, noise, fire-works, procession and carnivalesque has as its pretext a religious observance such as the honouring of the particular Saint of the village or the National Feast of the Shipwreck of St. Paul. In all this, the link between Priest and people was often further cemented by wide kinship connexions within the village. The son of an illiterate farmer might progress through Seminary and University to return to his home village as a priest and to be claimed as a relative by many members of that static and much inter-married community. 793 [796] [555]

Such proximity, together with the very number of the priesthood in any parish made for a familiarity with the personnel of the Church just as confession, fasting, observance of Saints' and other special days, quite apart from the daily Mass, made for close acquaintance with its practice.

It is convenient to use the past tense in the foregoing only because the picture sketched has been modified in recent decades. It is however still the essential basis of communal life, especially in the rural community which, as suggested, holds to traditional custom longer than does the town. The modifications which have appeared are important in this present consideration because they lie behind the current social upheaval in which the individual countryman is being faced with a clash of new against old. If, as seems possible, he leaps to the new so completely as to relinquish the old entirely, then the traditional order of society will disappear along with the agricultural system on which it is based. This is the problem of the farmer in Maltese rural society. 178

An early non-religious movement was that of the Band Clubs; the first appeared in Rabat in 1860. But even these came to be identified with particular Churches and also with parish rivalries. The Band Club grew to become a major feature of social life in both town and country in Malta, although in Gozo it has had only a limited extension outside Victoria. 575

The Band Club is essentially a male organisation. Women have never been more than tolerated spectators and, to this extent, the movement reflects the place of women in Maltese society. Emancipation of women has spread into the countryside from the towns but even today women take an undemonstrative part in village activity and their movement outside the home is largely confined to Church-going, shopping and possibly field-work. The modern young woman who has had at least eight years schooling seeks paid employment beyond the house and fields. In rural circles the tendency is still to frown mightily at such a suggestion but it can only be a matter of a few years before what is now accepted in Valletta becomes tolerated in rural Gozo. 562 [575] [462]

Functional diversification has been the keynote of twentieth century village society in the Maltese Islands. There is no evidence to show that there is any challenge to the position of the Parish Priest in matters religious (the situation has been less satisfactory from the point of view of the Church in urban Malta) 178

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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178 but there has been a delegation of his traditional secondary functions. The spread of Government primary education, for example, has produced a literate younger generation able to write - and think - for itself; rediffusion, cinemas, and television have made their presence felt; the Maltese-language press has grown in volume and scope; letters and visits from emigrated Maltese widen horizons rapidly; cheap bus transport puts most of the Malta within easy reach; health and social services have brought improvements; C.A.R.E. (2) and other relief supplies have brought a new external influence; the changing pattern of work with the new limited working day is giving the time for the novel activities made possible by cultural and material advancement. The last 50 years have seen the appearance and spread of the lay religious movements (see Chapter VI C) which have attempted to relieve the Priest of some of the work with which he had previously been able to contend unaided. The Society of Christian Doctrine [575] (M.U.S.E.U.M.), founded in 1909, was the first of these but larger and more comprehensive is Catholic Action whose four groups for men, women, young men, and young women have been established throughout the Islands to provide the modern Maltese parallel to the Village Institute, Youth Club and Church Fellowship of other countries.

178 241 654 The rural family was traditionally the economic unit within the village. A century ago, farming in Malta implied the self-sufficiency of the true subsistence peasant rather than the crop- and milk-selling producer of today. The food for the family came very largely from the fields worked by its members, milk from their own goats or sheep and clothing from home-produced cotton and wool.

Money and matters financial now occupy a major part of the thoughts of the Maltese farmer - even of the older generation, illiterate and cut off from more cultural developments. Barter as a means of exchange is breathing its last. Perhaps more than anything else did the 1939-45 war mark the change. During the years of siege and shortage the farmer was able to get prices for produce out of all proportion to anything before or since. With the return of conditions to normal after the war this Golden Age of Maltese farming collapsed but the farmer went on somehow expecting to make the same profits in peace as he had in war. The fact that he has not been able to do this, even with recent Government protective farming programmes of subsidies, guaranteed prices and other artificial inducements, has increased the bitterness which the farmer has come to feel for his lot. For its part, the Government has tried to keep the farming community as contented as possible and at the same time has embarked on attempts at dairy and general farming reforms of methods, varieties, marketing, etc., in an attempt to stop the retreat from the land and from the way of life based on it. The produce of the soil is, after all, Malta's only major locally-based industry. This has seemed to prove to the farmer that *'Gvern'* ought to do all that it has done for the farmer, and a lot more. The Government's recent policy has been to educate the farmer to accept the new ideas and novel methods and techniques and it has attempted to do this through lectures to farmers, programmes on rediffusion, and pamphlets - along with the inducements of subsidies and guarantees. But the limited success of this programme has emphasised the basic problem in farming today which is that the 'Farmer' is now the middle-aged or old man, whose lack of education and experience outside the community of his village makes it most unlikely that he will accept information and advice from those who are patently not *Maltese* farmers and lack the lifetime's association with the alleged idiosyncracies of the Maltese environment.

178 464 29 56 The younger generation, which has benefited from a thorough primary schooling, might have been the individuals to listen to lectures on farming but, and here is the basic problem, as a group the sons and daughters of farmers are desperate to leave the land and even more concerned to rid themselves of what they see as the social inferiority attached to the calling of their fathers. These young people have in fact been educated to an awareness of new possibilities of economic and social life outside farming and also outside the village community which bred them. So many of the younger generation have in fact managed to make the break with the way of life of their fathers that the average age of the Maltese farmer is now higher than only a few years ago, and is still rising (see Section III Introduction).

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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In terms of the social pattern of the rural village, this means that there is a very significant distinction to be made between the older generation of farmers proper and the younger generation whose direct attachment to the land and farming is weaker if not already broken. If one turns to a consideration of the way of life and living standards in the village community this gulf is apparent. Most spectacular perhaps are changes in clothing.

The familiar working garb of the farmer has been the heavy woollen vest, cotton trousers, waistcoat, and cap. Recently, army-surplus shirts, denims, etc., have replaced the locally-made garment, often of home-grown cotton, while the cummerbund is now rare. Sandals are normally worn for walking but not for work. The farmer who works round the clock has never had a 'best suit'. He attends Mass in his working clothes before going to the fields and, on Sundays and holidays, ventures forth as on any other day with the possible addition of a woollen cardigan or more presentable waistcoat. For women, the use of the *faldetta* ribbed hood has declined rapidly in the last 20 years and is now only worn by the older women in the villages and by female members of the M.U.S.E.U.M. movement. The use of black generally by women is declining but most clothes are still made in the home even if from bought material rather than home-produced cotton or wool. The younger generation are not usually content to venture forth dressed in the manner of their parents but insist on making their own appearance as much like that of the average town-dweller among whom they aim to move socially. The white shirt, smart suit, shoes, socks, and well-oiled hair of the young men and the bright dresses, high-heeled shoes, nylons and cosmetics of the village maidens are regarded as the essential uniform of the seeker after the bright lights of Valletta and the towns. The schools have played a part in this with their demands on cleanliness, footwear and dress in the classroom. Occasionally a child goes bare-foot to a village school but no one would think of visiting Valletta shoe-less. The imitation of urban standards of dress is particularly apparent in the sub-urban districts where the farming minority are at pains to 'keep up with the Vellas' in dress - in spite of the expense involved.

Diet in the traditional rural scene depended upon what could be produced by the fields and animals held by any family. The standard soups and stews (such as *minestra* and *brodu*) were consequently largely vegetable. Meat was rarer, fish seasonal and small birds might be added to a stew depending on the results of the hunting or, more correctly, shooting which was and is a popular Sunday and Holiday pastime in the countryside. The diet was rather less 'Italian' than that in Valletta and the towns, with potatoes in place of the various forms of farinaceous paste - spaghetti, macaroni, etc. As in the rest of the Islands before the 1939-45 war, milk was taken fresh from goats and sheep and was not infrequently disease-carrying. Tinned milk is now popular in town and country but consumption of bottled, pasteurised milk is growing. Tea and coffee drinking have to some extent replaced local and home-made wines, especially in the many bars and small cafés which have become the leisure-time resorts of the men of the villages between strolls in the squares and streets. Even here change is evidenced, for the traditional guitar-accompanied *ghana* of the Maltese peasant has given way to *Radio e Televisione Italiana* as the basis of café entertainment.

This very increase in leisure time is significant. The old farmer is content to spend the greater part of every day with his animals or in the fields for they are in fact his hobby as well as his livelihood. Cinemas and bright lights hold no attraction for him; but the young man insists on recreation as he sees it in the towns. The timetable of the farmer varies according to his type of farming. The herdsmen's life is ruled by the routine of feeding and attention demanded by his cows or goats and by the times of milk collection demanded by the Milk Marketing Undertaking. All this means an earlier daily start (sometimes 1 or 2 a.m.) than is usual for the field worker who begins his day with a 4 a.m. or 5 a.m. Mass and then stops for a light breakfast some three hours later. Lunch-time is 11 a.m. or noon and is followed by a *siesta* of some hours, depending on the season and the pressure of work to be completed before the sun goes down and the field-worker shoulders his hoe or his wooden plough and returns home

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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for the evening meal, Rosary, and sleep. Electricity has made his time-table only slightly less dependent on the times of the rising and setting sun.

Increased spending-power, a more varied diet now including a variety of preserved and non-local foods, and the replacement of home-produced cotton by purchased materials for making clothes, have all contributed to the extension of shopping facilities in the villages. Apart from the 'general store', specialised shops have also made their appearance - butchers, pharmacists, clothing shops, and so on. The 1939-45 war brought flour and bread rationing and the end of home-baking - hence a further village specialisation (see p. 182). Since the War, the number of vans touring the countryside every week has increased rapidly to bring a variety of wares to the door of even the most lonely farmhouse. The *petrolju* van was early in the field, for the rural Maltese have long relied on paraffin for both cooking and such heating as the houses receive. Yet another addition in recent years to the diet of the poorer classes has been the free distributions of food (cheese, rice, corn-meal and flour) made by C.A.R.E. and by Catholic Relief Services (cheese, beans, flour, etc.), another organisation distributing surplus United States food supplies abroad.

Village housing is changing more slowly. The traditional Maltese rural home was a flat-roofed dwelling built round an enclosed courtyard, from which a staircase frequently led to an upper floor. The courtyard was the centre of domestic life and much of the regular work of the household was done here. A door, large enough to take a cart, opened on to the street. Windows on outside walls were small and rare. In many of the older parts of the villages, accommodation for animals and stores adjoins the rooms occupied by the family, the whole forming a compact economic and domestic unit. Water was carried from a village pump and sanitation, if any, was limited to independent cess-pits requiring periodic emptying. In winter such premises were liable to be very cold; in the heat of summer the rough roads of beaten earth readily produced a fine dust which can only have had harmful effects on the widespread trachoma and similar ailments.

Nowadays much of this survives only in the memory of the older people. Only some village streets in Gozo are not now surfaced; mains sewerage has been extended to all the larger villages of Malta; electricity is absent only in north-western Gozo; familiar red telephone kiosks have appeared all over the Islands; the larger villages in Malta have cinemas, in addition to much older Band Club buildings.

The essential features of the village society within which the Maltese farmer lives today may be summarised thus in conclusion:-

Economically, there has been a change from the independent, subsistent family unit to a diversified and inter-dependent occupational structure in the village, along with a realisation of the impossibility of maintaining Maltese agriculture in its traditional form without 'artificial' support. Materially, the village is seen to have benefited from a wide range of developments which have improved it as a place in which to live for the Maltese countryman with his now greater range of demands - and the buying-power with which to achieve them, thanks to war-time siege and subsequently to Government subsidy and guarantee. Socially, literacy and the awareness of a different way of life beyond the village have brought to the younger generation an intense dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction not only with the social regime of the village, even in its present broadened and functionally diversified form, but also with the farming on which the community has depended.

Thus farming in its present form is waning and the Maltese farmer as he was in the recent past - and still is among the older generation - is a disappearing individual. If the clash between the present younger generation and the old order can be resolved and if the retreat from the land can be stemmed at all, a different kind of agriculture will emerge with a new type of farmer and a changed rural society.

REFERENCES

1. Census of the Maltese Islands 1948, Table 53.
2. C.A.R.E. - Co-operative for American Remittances to Everywhere.

Note: For a fuller consideration see B. W. Boxley: 'The Individual and Changing Rural Society in Malta', Ph.D. Thesis, Durham, 1956.

palms and pomegranates alongside potatoes - but in no case are conditions optimal or yields very good. In the comparatively closed economies of the past this mattered little; in an era of world trade and world markets Malta has now been left behind. Large-scale cotton production has virtually ceased and that of citrus fruit is declining; viticulture is of low standard and the olive tree very rare. Cereals can now provide only a tiny fraction of local needs while fodder production is limited in season and type by water shortage. 241

The critical phase in the social and economic reactions to the physical situation has also been reached. In the simple peasant communities of the past, the creative manual effort was necessarily associated with a low valuation of individual human effort and an arduous and restricted life. Now, however, economic and social opportunities and desires have widened and with them has come impatience with the demands imposed by the artificial landscape. 178

Higher per capita productivity to assure more freedom and leisure is only quickly attainable by technical and mechanical innovation. It is just such innovation that is impossible on a large scale on the land of Malta. 182 241

The slope analysis map (Fig. 28) illustrates one aspect of the problem. Maltese soil 12 inches deep needs, as a minimum amount, terracing at horizontal intervals of about 20 feet. Anything wider in the way of fields or a deeper soil makes essential increasingly higher and stronger retaining walls. The problem is such that considerable control is exercised by dip as well as gradient. The amount of labour involved in maintenance is heartbreaking by modern standards and yet, without it, erosion is quickly followed by the complete stripping away of the soil down to bare rock. The scale of farming operations often has to be very small - the planting of single rows of beans, of single trees, the sowing of chick-peas in rock crevices. Power and tool application is severely restricted. Small and light implements and single draught animals or more recently 'rotavators' alone can negotiate this type of terrain and work very thin soils covering rock platforms. The dangerous effect of the abandonment of any land is obvious. The past has in fact enchained the present. If cultivation is to continue then in order to preserve the artificial ecological balance, created with such effort over the centuries, a social imbalance will become even stronger. Whatever the scale of farming the farmer will always have to grub for soil, build his terraces, carry his plough or manhandle his rotavator for long hours under conditions that will seem less attractive even than those of casual dockside and urban labour. 311 [134]

The first point then is that the landscape indicates how human effort is pinned down by the artificial environment and how restive man is becoming.

The second theme is concerned with the reasons for the historical process of what really amounts to landscape gardening, and with the underlying implications. 175 241

Malta's wealth, in historical times at least, has come from a large extra-territorially derived income which has resulted from the Island's positional value. It is possible that even in prehistoric times Malta was never self-sufficient. The great temple building cultures of Malta and Gozo may well have maintained their master masons on imported wealth. Certainly Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs and Normans all occupied Malta because of its strategic position and took wealth in rather than removed it. The Order of St. John held it as an outpost of Christendom maintained by the Knights' possessions on the European mainland. Britain has similarly supported the Island's economy in return for its use as a naval, military and more recently a strategic air centre. Because of Malta's positional importance its inhabitants found it necessary and worth while to create agricultural resources. Because Malta has usually been an outpost the society and its works have attained the unstable equilibrium of a siege life. 648

At least since Arab occupation a duality has appeared in the community. Earliest at Mdina, later in the Three Cities, then in Valletta and the whole Grand Harbour complex, and now around the naval, military and air bases, the garrisons have formed successive nuclei of a cosmopolitan and sophisticated community. This community, literate, trained in the professions and trades has 369

1 A [See pp. 98-B and 98-C -- Analyst]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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369 formed a facade behind which has hidden an old slow-changing and parochial Malta.

The towns are Italianate in character, the farm buildings archaically indigenous; the city dwellers speak a Maltese liberally sprinkled with European loanwords, the countryfolk's language is more strongly semitic. The urban place [103] names are usually historical or religious in character - Valletta, Kingsway or Strada Reale, Triq San Pietru; in the country one finds the older elements - Żebbuġ, place of the olive, Hamrija - red soil, Kalanka - hard stone. The Three Cities themselves have two sets of names - Kospikwa, Senglea, Vittoriosa for the Knights and their successors, Bormla, Isla and Birgu for the people. Architecture, language, place names, consumption patterns, even temperament still divide the two sections of the community. The farmers' forebears who helped to build Valletta on the barren Xibberas peninsula, and the citadels, the coastal towers, literally built a stone curtain which cut off their descendants from the outside world. These two societies, one cosmopolitan, one parochially Boeotian, have existed until recently in a fairly amicable symbiotic relationship. The country produced the labour and the iron rations of agricultural produce, the cities supplied the markets and provided the basis of defence.

178 Under British occupation however, and during the social and technical revo-
369 lutions of the nineteenth century, this balance started to break down. For the
464 first time, considerable opportunities of non-rural employment became available. The high tide of pressure on land resources started to ebb in the last decades of the nineteenth century, leaving a flood mark of land laid out but never taken [166] up in the western hills. Labour started leaving full time farming, villages such as Safi lost population to new centres like Kalafrana. There has been an actual and psychological diminishing of that pressure on land resource that brought the present landscape into being. In spite of a three-fold increase in 150 years, the population rising to over 300,000, the number of full-time farmers is now probably smaller than it was 50 years ago.

178 A third estate and a new imbalance have been created. Fifty-eight per cent.
182 of the gainfully employed population works for the Government and Service
[464] Departments, as compared with less than 10 per cent. in full-time agriculture.
[169] This section of the community, once it has severed its roots in the land, is also apt to sever its connection with Malta. Net emigration between 1945 and 1954 totalled over 45,000 and the population total now fluctuates rather than shows a steady increase. It has been fortunate that the direct pressure on land has slackened since the demands directly and indirectly to support the garrisons have grown with inexorable inevitability. Forts, naval bases and airfields, storage depots and houses - many more houses, have devoured scanty land. This conflict of interests has always been present - long before the conflicting needs of flying boats and fishing fleets caused trouble in 1956. The breaking down of the old equilibrium is caused by a variety of forces and in turn further strengthens these forces. Environmental limitation of personal opportunity has become as irksome as the desire for national political independence and the necessity for economic dependence. Social policy urged on by growing needs is hamstrung by natural poverty. In town and country alike a painful groping towards a new equilibrium at a twentieth century level is manifest.

Lastly what of the response to these challenges? What are the reasons for the slowness of recent adjustment? Fear, lack of security, the very factors that made Malta important as an outpost and earned her a George Cross are also responsible for many of her difficulties. The distribution of settlements is one indicator of this fear. In the traditional area of invasion and attack, the broken lands of the West, there occurs only one town, Mellieha, and even this, hidden from the sea in a defensible position, has only grown rapidly in the last 80 years. Another indicator is the strength of the Church and the general devotion it commands. Vast wealth and effort has gone into the building and adorning of the individual churches - symbols of one type of guardianship.

178 Fear - inherent or acquired - has hindered development in many ways.
182 Industry and commerce have never fully flowered because local capital has always
454 flown to areas of less risk. How can it be blamed? Even 25 years ago, who would

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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have guaranteed that the United Kingdom would not have abandoned Malta in the event of war in the Mediterranean? Those Maltese possessing power and knowledge traditionally have had too much to lose by local investment. The inadequacy of commercial port handling facilities, the paucity of processing industries, the shortage of credit, all these are products of fear. 178 182 [954]

Moreover, the changing circumstances of Mediterranean life which have increased security have also deprived Malta of her most easily earned income from entrepôt trade and her value as a calling station. The old commercial and financial attitudes of the most sophisticated part of society have become anachronisms in a new age, but still remain locally very deadening in their encouragement of hand-to-mouth activity.

What of old Malta? There the problem is one of breaking down isolation and correcting mental indigestion. The farmers of Malta have been commercially minded and experimentally inclined for centuries. Production for sale and exchange is the rule rather than the exception. But in fact they have little knowledge of commercial possibilities nor are they able to deal on equal terms with merchants. Often prepared to try new crops and equipment, their ignorance concerning the processes involved produces unhappy results. In short, the rural community in its partial isolation has seized with avidity a few crumbs of opportunity and knowledge and has never properly assimilated them.

It is a divided Malta that has met the new challenge, each sector too burdened with its past to respond vigorously on its own initiative.

The historic creation of an artificial environment has imposed severe restrictions on methods of utilising land, both now and in the future. The historic reasons for that creation have produced an ambivalent society, one part hampered by fear, one part hampered by ignorance. The main need now is for political security and a certain amount of economic stability. With security and stability the extrovert community may plough in its wealth rather than keep it poised for flight. The introvert rural community can then in turn translate its traditional experience into scientific idiom. In a suitable socio-economic climate and in an undivided society, many things could flourish, export market gardening and horticulture, processing industries, tourism, entrepôt trade and even sub-tropical research and training. Without such development, as is already foreshadowed in the landscape, Malta will become stagnant, depending on war and rumours of war for anything more than starvation level existence, while the landscape itself will reveal more and more of those rocky bare bones so decently interred in the past.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

794 distinctive habit of the confraternity in processions, in which the [242] *fratelli* play an important part. Entrance to a confraternity is by means of a short religious ceremony and the payment of a small fee. This entitles the newly professed member to share in the indulgences, privileges and spiritual favours which have accrued to the society.

Every confraternity is established independently in each parish, and has nothing to do with confraternities of the same name in other villages. Before the band clubs were established, confraternities were the only formally constituted associations in rural [554] parishes. Their officers enjoyed considerable prestige, and had a voice in village affairs. But today the members seldom meet as a [178] group and most confraternities have no premises of their own, though they generally have an altar in the parish church. Aside from the dozen or two who take part in all the parish processions, members take no part in any activity. A few confraternities [423] which own property are a notable exception. Their officers meet occasionally to discuss the business affairs of the confraternity, and the societies still play an active role in local affairs.

There are also a number of third orders. These societies are lay counterparts of certain religious orders. They are organized in much the same way as the confraternities. Members attend occasional spiritual exercises and have the right to take part in processions and to be buried in the habit of the order. Altogether there are 16 different confraternities and third orders. Among the most common are the confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament, which is established in all parishes, the Holy Rosary, Our Lady of Consolation (*Ta' Ċintura*), St. Joseph and the Third Orders of the Franciscans and the Carmelites.

554 All groups and individuals that are tied to the Church are 79 ranked. Each parish, religious order and parish society has its fixed position in the overall order. The same applies to the clerics who constitute its personnel. Position in the hierarchy is determined by seniority of foundation in the case of parishes and associations – or date of ordination or appointment to present office, in the case of the clergy – in combination with certain marks of honour conferred by the Church authorities. Such honours carry with them a claim to higher precedence than seniority by itself would give. For example, any parish in which there is a Collegiate Chapter, or whose church has the title of Basilica, ranks higher than one

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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level. There are also many village clerks and teachers who speak English to their children to help prepare them for school, for a sound command of English is a prerequisite to social advancement.

It is quite true that education has been given greater emphasis in the urban areas than in the villages; but the introduction of compulsory education between the ages of six and fourteen is rapidly closing this gap. The spread of education is reflected in the decline of illiteracy. In 1948, just two years after the introduction of compulsory education, 16 per cent of the population of Valletta and Sliema over fourteen years of age, and 47 per cent of the same age group in Gozo, were illiterate. By 1957, these figures had fallen to 9 per cent and 22 per cent respectively. During the same period, the national illiteracy rate declined from 37 per cent to 17 per cent.[1]

A number of other forces operate to reduce the social distance between town and country. The greater employment opportunities during and after the war, and the continuous improvement in public transport that allowed the villagers to take advantage of them, have placed an ever-increasing number of villagers alongside townsmen at desks and work benches. The war itself was a major force in the same direction, for British troops and people from the urban areas were evacuated to the country to escape the bombing attacks, and so shared the life of their rural neighbours. All learned a good deal from one another. It is not surprising, therefore, that many Maltese, especially in the villages, regard the last war as a social milestone, a dividing line between past dependence upon agriculture and present wage labour, between poverty and relative prosperity.

II

The inhabitants of the villages in Malta no longer derive their livelihood from agriculture, though this was the rule a century ago. Today most are semi-skilled and unskilled industrial labourers who work outside their villages for the Malta Government, the

[1] *Eleventh Census of the Maltese Islands, 1948* (Valletta, Progress Press), pp. 297 ff.; and *1957 Census of the Maltese Islands: Report on Population and Housing* (Valletta, Central Office of Statistics, 1958), pp. 41 ff. The two sets of figures are not quite comparable. Those for 1948 represent the total number of illiterates, while the 1957 figures show only the number of people who never attended school.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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giant dockyard in Cospicua, or for one of the various British Service departments scattered over the island. Gozo is more dependent upon agriculture, but many Gozitan men work in Malta, returning to their families for the weekend. Though Maltese villages are populated mostly by industrial workers, they have nonetheless a decidedly rural atmosphere about them, for their inhabitants still have links with the agricultural economy of the past. Many retain a patch or two of land which they plant with potatoes or some other cash crop to supplement their wages, and virtually all keep chickens and rabbits to supply them with eggs and fresh meat for special celebrations.

TABLE 1. Occupational Classes in Farrug and Kortin[1]
(Expressed as percentages of the total male working population)

Occupational Class	*Farrug*	*Kortin*	*Islands*
Professional and Clerical	4	7	15
Service and Skilled	39	52	55
Semi- and Unskilled	42	27	20
Agricultural	15	14	10
Totals	100	100	100

A hundred years ago, the inhabitants of Farrug were mostly farmers, though many were also employed on a cottage-industry basis in the thriving cotton industry of the time. Today they are for the most part wage labourers. Of the total male working population, 42 per cent are employed as semi-skilled and unskilled labourers, 39 per cent work as skilled fitters and as service personnel (shopkeepers, drivers, policemen, etc.) and 15 per cent as farmers. Only 4 per cent are professionals and white-collar workers. Three-fourths travel outside the village to their places of employment, chiefly with the Malta Government and the British military departments.

The occupational structure of Kortin is much the same. The higher proportion of skilled and clerical workers is in part a reflection of its past importance as an administrative centre, for until early in this century it was the seat of the district court. Seven per cent of the men work in professional and white-collar

[1] The figures for Farrug and Kortin are based on surveys I conducted, and the national figures on the *1957 Census: Report on Economic Activities*, pp. 45–55. The totals of the male working population in Farrug, Kortin and the Maltese Islands are 296, 1,131 and 75,930 respectively.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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the village, which draws in native sons and daughters from all over the country, and often from as far away as Canada and Australia. This loyalty is also evident at other times. Villagers like to think of themselves as a united body, and they take care to protect the appearance of unity before strangers. This is an attitude of which anyone studying the social history of a village becomes keenly aware. Strangers are thus treated with great reserve. The inhabitants of the smaller villages are well known for their reluctance to give any information about their neighbours to strangers. Inquiring visitors are often referred to the parish priest, who, as village spokesman, screens them and, if possible, deals with their questions. The reserve of a village *vis-à-vis* a stranger is considerably more than just an expression of village loyalty. Present also is the very real fear of vengeance should the answer to a stranger's question lead to some unpleasantness for a neighbour. Social relations in a small village are to a very considerable extent governed by the proverb 'Don't make an enemy of your neighbour' (*Taghmilx ghadu lil ġarek*).

In view of this loyalty, it is not surprising that people express their solidarity with their native village by opposition to other villages. A village's traditional rivals are usually those with which it has the most frequent contact. I was almost invariably warned by villagers that the inhabitants of the neighbouring village were a treacherous and savage lot. There are many tales of hostility between neighbouring villages, especially over the celebration of the annual festa, which I dare say have lost nothing in retelling. I was told a number of stories of how youths stampeded goats through their rivals' festa processions, and of expeditions which stole fireworks, attacked street decorations and performed other daring escapades. Although most of these adventures are said to have taken place many years ago, they are no more unusual than some of the incidents that I witnessed.

If the intense inter-village rivalry of former times has abated somewhat, it is probably because increased education and contact outside the villages have helped to break down ignorance and isolation. But this rivalry still lies dormant, and may flare up at the slightest provocation from a traditional rival; I have seen a number of fights over trivial incidents during festas and football matches. The number of police at village feasts and the quantity and density of the barbed-wire entanglements at the Schreiber

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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[p.40]

CHAPTER IV

The Basis of Leadership

621 The Maltese word for leader, *mexxej*, is seldom heard, and then
[192] only in reference to the leader of a political party. I once asked a
[622] parish priest who were the leaders of the village. He laughed and
[551] replied that there weren't any, because his parishioners did not like leaders. With the exception of the professionals and *il-puliti* from the towns, all the inhabitants of a village usually call one another by their Christian names and in general look upon each other as equals. This egalitarian outlook is compounded of many factors, of which the most important are similar occupation, standard of living and values, the detailed knowledge of each other's personal lives that comes with residence in a face-to-face community, and
178 jealousy. Any person who attempts to lead or to try to start
578 something new – such as a village playground – is derided. His
621 true motive is seen as self aggrandizement and his enemies and envious neighbours are quick to point this out to others who may
[539] not have realized it. 'Envy follows the wise man like his shadow' (*L-ghira titrot wara l-gharef bhal dellu mieghu*), goes the Maltese
[609] proverb. Professionals and outsiders, especially if they are from the town, are occasionally able to start something new. Their social distance from most of the community protects them from the full impact of the envy and gossip which moulds so much of village life.

554 But in spite of the absence of official lay leaders and the con-
621 servative pressure of envy and gossip, there are a number of
793 persons who have a greater say than others in the affairs of the community. They are able to do this by virtue of their social position, their occupation or office in one of the village associations or their influence with the parish priest. These persons, together with the parish priest, form the aggregate which can be
[192] said to run the affairs of the community. While there is no generic term for this aggregate, those who compose it are sometimes referred to as *il-kbarat*, 'the big ones', or more derogatively as

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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letters. His high standing in the village, and his contacts with people of influence and power outside it, led people to turn to him for advice. He was asked to represent them in their relations with the outside world. In this capacity he served his parishioners as lawyer, banker and business adviser. He was also the traditional dispenser of charity.

The increasing literacy of the people and their ever-widening range of contacts outside the limits of the parish has somewhat reduced their dependence upon the parish priest. The State's recent involvement in welfare and charity has further weakened it. But if this dependence has been reduced, it has most certainly not been eliminated. Many still call on him to divide inheritances, to argue their claims against the government or to plead with prospective employers, and not a few expect him to be able to secure better roads, new schools, sewerage and playgrounds.

Thus the parish priest is the village's chief spokesman, and many still refer to him as *il-principal tar-rahal*, 'the head of the village'. The government has long recognized this, and makes use of him as a convenient contact with the people. Each Sunday morning, in addition to his own official announcements, the parish priest reads from the altar government notices advising the people of forthcoming elections, immunization campaigns, agricultural extension lectures and so on.

But if the parish priest performs numerous services for his parishioners, both individually and collectively, he has also the power to refuse them. The sanctions with which he can punish disobedience are considerable. They range from declining to write a good conduct certificate to denying absolution in confession. On the other hand, he has the power to give rewards for services rendered. Aside from doing favours for people who have helped him, he can appoint them to offices which confer prestige and authority and, in some cases, are also financially rewarding. All this serves to underline and reinforce his position as a leader in the community.

Parish priests are usually outsiders, but the rest of the village clergy are natives of the communities in which they live. Unlike Catholic priests in Britain or the United States, who live in presbyteries, the diocesan clergy of Malta and Gozo live at home with their relatives. This means that they remain in constant contact with the village. They are often called on to take part in family

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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There is considerable difference in the social status ascribed to various jobs. Non-manual occupations have the highest status, manual occupations the lowest. The professionals – the priest, doctor, lawyer, chemist or teacher – are at the top; while the farmers are at the bottom. In many respects a government clerical officer is also at the other end of the scale from the farmer. The civil servant has a steady, relatively easy job with a good cash income and comfortable pension at the end. He also has ready access to influential persons in the government. His is a life of security and relative independence. The farmer, on the other hand, has been looked down on for centuries. He represents the traditional life of dependence: dependence upon the weather, the market, the *pitkal*, or middleman, for cash advances, the letter-writer and the patron through whom established authority has to be contacted. Education and wage labour have presented the farmer with a means of escape from that dependence and the exhausting labour in his rocky fields. Where he has had the opportunity, he has been quick to turn his back on the traditional occupation of his forefathers.

Wealth is another determinant of status. This is generally related to occupation. There has always been a considerable difference between the standard of living of the professionals and that of the average countryman. But until the past war, there was relatively little difference in the standard of living of most villagers. True, the more affluent lived in the large houses on the main square, and the poorer people lived in the alleys and streets remote from the square. Most people ate similar food, dressed alike and furnished their houses in the same way. But the increase in the level of wages, which followed the war, has changed that pattern. New houses, cars, fridges and transistor radios have become a tangible index of success and status. People are now being graded according to the number of these symbols they own.

Education, occupation and wealth are thus the chief criteria by which social position is differentiated. A person who has all these attributes has high status. But a person with high status is not necessarily a leader; for he may not possess the innate qualities required of a successful leader – courage, responsibility and willingness to work. Where a person has both high status and possesses these qualities – as well as ambition – he will undoubtedly

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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156 be successful in the field of village politics. From there he can
554 move into national politics.

156 Traditionally, age was an important determinant of status. Age
178 meant wisdom, experience and position at the head of a large
554 family. The deference accorded to age is preserved in the proverb
561 'Heed well the words of the elders' (*Kliem ix-xih żomm ħli*). But
[539] in a society where teenage sons work as skilled labourers, clerks and teachers while their fathers still farm or dig ditches, and where schoolboys read letters, newspapers and voting instructions to their illiterate parents, the words of the elders are often not heard. The social and cultural gap between the old and the young is wider now than it has been for many generations. Today leadership in the villages is in relatively young hands. Old parish registers support the memories of the present generation of elders that this has not always been the case.

156 Village sons who are professionals often become presidents of
463 their local band clubs. Very often they no longer live in their
554 native villages. Most marry town-bred girls from professional
591 families who do not wish to leave their urban surroundings and
[575] friends to live amongst people they regard as their inferiors in every sense. Though village-born professionals find it con-
[643] venient for business purposes to live in the town, most lawyers continue to practise in their native villages. But when they continue to reside in their villages, even though their social life and many of their business interests are oriented away from the community, they normally enjoy great prestige. This works to enlarge their professional clientele. These assets can easily be converted into political support, and many village doctors and lawyers have gone successfully into politics.

156 Dr. Farrugia of Kortin, the town's only lawyer and its leading
159 citizen, is a case in point. A native of Kortin, he is the son of old
693 Manwel, the retired teacher who runs the Good Friday procession. Of a relatively modest background, he married the daughter of the former lawyer in the village, and took over the latter's
[575] large practice when he died. Past president of both the football and social clubs, a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, he has been president of the band club for many years. He is also a successful politician at the national level.

554 Frequently the government District Medical Officers are the
759 only professionals resident in the villages in which they work.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

each association, including the religious ones.[1] The committee forwarded the names of the representatives of its three constituent clubs to Dun Bert. After some time, when they had received no reply from him, they wrote to the Archbishop. Finally, some two months later, Dun Bert wrote back that he could not accept any member of a political party committee on the parish council. This was clearly aimed at the secretary of the band club, who was a very active member of the Labour Party committee, the only political committee in the village. He was not willing to step down, and the other members of the committee supported his decision. The rest of the village slowly lost interest in the matter. The parish priest thus had his way, and is still in full control of the feast.

Many are still bitter about the manner in which their request to take a more active part in the organization of their feast was suppressed, but most have accepted it. They miss not so much the old festa committee, the members of which most people criticized freely, as the feeling they had had of all working together for the greater glory of the village. The members of the old committee at least had the virtue of being from the village, and were as anxious as the next person to celebrate the biggest and best feast in Malta, or so I was often told. Although no one suggested that the parish priest is anything but scrupulously honest, they consider that as an outsider, he does not have the same keen interest in their feast, and in the reputation of the village. Others, less charitable, accuse him of being hungry for power and anxious to enrich himself with his fees as procurator of the festa. Many also spoke to me with regret of the passing of the annual fairs, which the parish priest has not attempted to run on his own. The fairs were exciting occasions on which young and old, rich and poor, competed against each other in games of chance and raffles to win back the rabbits and chickens which they had previously donated to the festa. They say they miss the sense of unity that the fairs brought them. 'In those days we knew each other better,' one priest remarked. 'With the fair some of the poetry of the village was destroyed.' Perhaps, without expressing it in quite this fashion, the organizers of the committee, in their own way, were also seeking this lost poetry.

[1] Such parish councils have from time to time been established in some of the larger villages and towns, but most of them came to threaten the authority of the parish priests, who therefore disbanded them.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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be illuminated and that only one band on the eve and one on the day of the feast would be allowed. Although they are now ignored, the regulations also placed limits upon the variety, quantity and duration of firework displays. Finally, they drew attention to the already existing regulations that church decorations and new works of art introduced for secondary feasts should be less costly and beautiful than those for titular feasts.[1]

Parish priests were expected to insist on the observance of these regulations, and they succeeded so well that some secondary feasts were reduced to minor celebrations. Moreover, the *pika* between the partiti in Żabbar and Qrendi was so violent that the secondary feasts there were suppressed completely.[2] This served as a stern warning to others.

II

The story of the origin and development of the festa partiti in Farrug is in many respects similar to the accounts which I collected about festa partiti in other villages. It might, therefore, be helpful to examine it in some detail. Before 1877 there were no festa partiti in the village; everyone co-operated in the celebration of the feast of St. Martin, the patron of the parish. By all accounts it was a humble one, and lasted only one day. This period is described as an idyllic time during which the village was happy and united. But in 1876 a new parish priest arrived, and after that the scene began to change. Dun Rokku, the new priest, not only had a strong personal devotion to the saint after whom he had been named, but he was also from a village where there was a strong secondary partit devoted to St. Roque. Within a year he established a confraternity dedicated to St. Roque in order to 'inject some more life into this rural parish', according to the president of the St. Roque Band Club. The first feast in honour of St. Roque was celebrated in October 1878 to mark the establishment of the confraternity. Although the new secondary feast was at first a simple affair, it and the titular feast grew during the next few years.

[1] Concilium Regionale Melitense (1935), *Decreta* (Malta, Empire Press, 1936), p. 91.

[2] In Żabbar the devotion to St. Michael, the secondary patron, died out almost completely, though the *pika* between the bands has persisted. But in Qrendi the devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes, the secondary patron, has continued as strong as ever. In 1938 the Archbishop reinstated the confraternity dedicated to her, which his predecessor suppressed in 1935, but the partit band is still not allowed to play for her feast.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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definition of the dogma of her immaculate conception four years earlier, and to St. Joseph, who was declared patron of the Catholic Church in 1870. Virtually all the secondary partiti are dedicated to one of these two.[1] At the same time, there was a general elaboration of the celebrations connected with the cult of saints, including the Italian and Sicilian custom of having bands play during the festas.[2] These were but a part of the more general influx of Italian ideas and customs which accompanied the refugees from Italy of the Risorgimento, who streamed into Malta following 1850. The propaganda efforts of the pro-Italian politicians of the time assisted in the diffusion of these customs, especially in the urban areas.

During this period a conception of social organization new to Malta was also gaining currency, namely the idea of voluntary associations for laymen, and in particular, social clubs for 'gentlemen'. After the establishment in Valletta of the exclusive British Union Club in 1826 and the equally exclusive Casino Maltese in 1850, clubs of various kinds began to spring up in many villages. They multiplied so rapidly that a local chronicler wrote in 1890, 'Today you don't find a village without one or two, nor a city without three or five.'[3]

The latter half of the last century was a period of relative economic prosperity for Malta. This resulted from the increase in military and naval activity after the outbreak of the Crimean War; the sharp expansion in government spending on public works programmes from 1859 to 1865; and the renewed world demand for Maltese cotton as a result of the cotton shortage created by the American Civil War.[4] The economic boom increased the demand for unskilled labour from the villages. This, in turn, helped to disseminate urban-Italian cultural traits. It also provided a financial basis which permitted increased expenditure on festa decorations, fireworks, and above all, uniforms and instruments for the bands. Finally, this period saw the establishment of government schools in all the villages. City-born schoolmasters moved into rural

[1] See Appendix A.

[2] See, for example, Giuseppe Pitrè, *Feste Patronali in Sicilia*, vol. XXI of *Biblioteca delle Tradizioni Populari Siciliane* (Torino-Palermo, Carlo Clausen, 1900), *passim*. He also indicates that a number of Sicilian towns and villages are divided by rivalry between supporters of different saints. (pp. xlvii ff.)

[3] P. P. Castagna, *Lis-Storia Ta Malta* (3 vols.; Valletta, C. Busuttil, 1890), III, 128.

[4] Charles A. Price, *Malta and the Maltese: A Study in Nineteenth Century Migration* (Melbourne, Georgian House, 1954), pp. 105 ff.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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communities where they became leaders, and the source of many new ideas and customs. In Għaxaq, for example, I found that a teacher born in Valletta had been the one to introduce the custom of decorating the streets for the festa.

It is, of course, extremely difficult, if not impossible, to discover the motives which prompted people to choose a particular partit. The only possible clue to at least one set of reasons may well lie in the correlation between occupational class and partit affiliation. Apart from this class alignment, I found no evidence in Fārrug, or any other village so divided, of any pre-existing structural division out of which these festa partiti might have developed. In view of the way membership is inherited, it would appear that the position which members of the great-grandfather generation occupied in the village class structure in some way influenced their choice of partit. There is some evidence for this, although not a great deal, to be found in the genealogies of the present generation. Frequent marriages with outsiders, emigration and the changing employment structure of the country over the past six decades have blurred this picture considerably.

But it is certainly possible that the new cult appealed more to those persons who held no office in the older confraternities and who performed no official functions in connection with the celebration of the annual festa of the village patron. Through the new cult they could gain offices and perform functions which hitherto had been monopolized by the circle of the village elite who surrounded the pariah priest. Some informants have also mentioned that young men were particularly attracted to the new cult. In this we can see the universal resistance of the young to the authority of their elders, for by becoming active in the new cult, they were asserting their independence from the controls of the older generation. Were the secondary partiti then a form of protest against the established authority, a sort of underdogs' party?

Other facts appear to support the hypothesis that the foundation of the secondary partiti was in some way related to a wider working-class movement. Many of the partiti are dedicated to St. Joseph, the patron saint of the working classes who were beginning to organize themselves into formal associations throughout Europe. In Malta there are many signs that this devotion was very strong. In addition to the many new confraternities dedicated to

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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not rationalize the distinction he makes between the person and the office of the cleric he attacks, though his behaviour shows that he does make one, the Labour supporter often proclaims that he makes such a distinction, when in fact he does not. The MLP not only challenges the statements of the Archbishop which apply to the political scene, but often questions his right to make them. This explains the difference in the reaction of the Church to the two forms of anti-clericalism.

I have suggested that the one prepares the way for the other. The rebellious atmosphere created by the disputes between the festa partiti is, I believe, as important a factor as occupational class in explaining the relatively high degree of open support the Labour Party has in the southern villages. The extent of this support, especially in the smaller villages, in spite of the sanctions of the Church, came as a surprise to some of the leaders of the MLP, who had always thought of them as dominated by their parish priests, like the small villages in Gozo. But in the spring of 1961, the small villages of Kirkop, Dingli and Gudja were placed first, second and third in an MLP competition to find the community which had the greatest proportion of new Party members. I suggest that the support for the MLP in these three villages is due not so much to their proportion of industrial labourers, which in any case is not particularly high (23, 20 and 35 per cent respectively),[1] as to their strong tradition of rebellion against the authority of the Church. Kirkop and Gudja both have active festa partiti of long standing, and while Dingli has no festa partiti now, the village has a long history of opposition to its parish priests. For example, shortly after the First World War, the Dingli Social Club had an argument with the parish priest, and for many years after, members celebrated the national feast on 8 September, instead of the patronal feast of the Assumption, simply to annoy him.

V

But whatever complex and diverse reasons people have for taking sides, the division has given rise to conflict in most villages. In this respect Kortin is no different, as the slogans displayed during the battle of the blackboards indicated. The division has cut right

[1] *1957 Census: Report on Economic Activities*, pp. 41–2.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

178 across the village and the clubs, and has brought about conflict
578 within many families. People lament the change that has come
621 over the village as a result. An old bachelor friend often used to complain that had we come to live there just a few years ago, 'before politics came and spoiled everything', we would have found the village a far happier place. Picnics and outings were more frequent then, and groups of friends used to gather on hot summer evenings and stroll outside the village to play guitars and sing the lilting Maltese *ghana* in the cool air away from the houses.
[575] There was also more life in the clubs. Both the Social Club and
[796] the Band Club used to take part in the national carnival competition for the best decorated carts and costumed companies. But as the political conflict has divided the island's carnival celebration in two, so it has also affected the clubs. They now celebrate neither the government's carnival nor that of the MLP for fear the question of which one to participate in would provoke a fight that would cripple the club.

578 Dun Bert, the parish priest in Kortin, is of course the head of
665 the local group which supports the Archbishop and opposes the
793 MLP. His chief lieutenants in the fight are the local clergy and the
794 lay leaders of the religious associations. Pawlu and Anton, his two faithful helpers, are also vocal partisans, as is old Manwel. Dr. Farrugia, old Manwel's son, as a former member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and a leading member of one of the political parties opposed to the MLP, also belongs to the pro-Church division in the village, though he takes little part in its day-to-day
275 affairs. The main activity and support comes from the leaders of
578 the lay associations, especially of the Young Christian Workers,
665 the MUSEUM and the Sodality of Our Lady. These all meet regu-
794 larly in their respective premises. Many of the others, older men, spend much of their free time in Kelinu's café. These include old Manwel, Pawlu, Anton, the sacristan, the organist, and Dun Mikiel and Dun Filip, respectively the chaplains of the female and male sections of Catholic Action. This café, located right next to Dr. Farrugia's house, is the nicest café on the square, or in the village for that matter. It is the only one which the clergy, the teachers and occasionally Dr. Farrugia himself, frequent. It is thus the headquarters of the more influential village citizens who sup-
[517] port the Archbishop. Most MLP supporters have stopped going to it, although a few still play cards there for an hour or so in the late afternoon when they return from work.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

VI

It is of course an open question how much longer the intense partit spirit can survive in the face of the political division now cutting across all festa partiti. In Farrug the division between the festa partiti, such a strong force in the past, is now of less importance as a principle of social organization than the rivalry between the supporters and opponents of the MLP. The relative importance in Farrug, as everywhere, of this latter division is directly related to the intensity of the conflict at the national level between the MLP and the Church. If it decreases, so will that at the village level. But the longer it lasts, the more difficult it will be to remove it completely from the social scene. Both the Church and the Labour Party, through their respective societies, committees and social clubs, are building up an institutional framework that is incorporating this political opposition on a permanent basis in all villages. This is taking place in much the same way as the confraternities and social clubs a hundred years ago made permanent the conflict between rival factions competing over the celebration of saints.

The rivalry between the Church and the MLP, as well as that between competing political parties, reflects the increasing involvement of the villager in the political life of his country. It was perhaps only due to Malta's peculiar position as a colony and an island fortress, a role which effectively prevented the development of an active internal political life of the more conventional kind, that competition over church privileges and saints was able to assume the importance it has. It is not surprising that the changing nature of Malta's strategic and constitutional position should alter the tempo and character of its internal political life. In the villages, this change is reflected in the weakening of the festa partiti by national political issues.

4: Cassar P-4, 5 (no date) 1964 EZ6 Malta EZ6

782 silver medal, seventeen "ex-votos" of silver, and £39 10s. 6d. in cash' (*Id-devot ta Maria*, 1894). In November 1961 twenty-two gold rings and thirty-one pairs of gold ear-rings, besides sums of money, were offered as 'ex-votos' at the shrine of St Rita at St Augustine's Priory, Valletta (*Santa Rita*, 1961, p. 192).

DISCUSSION

154 The relief of anxiety is one of the basic needs of the human personality. In a religion-
782 conditioned community, such as that of the Maltese Islands, one of the most potent
771 defence mechanisms against life-threatening situations consists in prayer and the offer of
753 'ex-votos' to the Godhead in order to receive deliverance in return. Perhaps what
761 underlies this aspect of human behaviour is the idea that sickness and death are punitive measures from the Godhead for lapses committed by oneself, one's relatives, or one's community. As a matter of fact, the notion that illness is sent by God as a punishment for sins is still a current folk-belief in the Maltese Islands. The same trend of thought finds expression in certain depressive psychoses where the patient shows a heightened feeling of guilt and is convinced that divine wrath has been visited upon himself and his close relatives in the form of disease or death. It appears, therefore, that the 'ex-voto' is not a mere token of gratitude for a favour received but is also a propitiatory offering to appease the offended deity and thus obtain his pardon and the removal of the punish-
154 ment. The element of sacrifice is implied in the self-denying act of surrendering a
782 precious thing in return for recovery of health or rescue from imminent death, either
171 materially in the shape of money or jewellery, or symbolically in the form of an anatomical representation of one's body. Whatever the psychological motivation prompting the offer of 'ex-votos', there is no doubt that they throw an illuminating sidelight on the part played by religious belief in the history of healing in the Maltese Islands since prehistoric times. They are also a testimony to the beneficial influence of religious *mores* (1) in satisfying the natural craving for security felt by the individual and by the community when faced with the crises of life, and (2) in maintaining morale and the will to live when the failure of medical skill tends to disorganize and destroy them. Indeed the 'ex-votos' reveal the story of the triumph of hope and faith over the trials and sufferings of countless generations of Maltese men and women who had found themselves beyond the help of contemporary science and of human assistance. It is needless to emphasize the recasting of Maltese religious beliefs after their conversion to Christianity in A.D. 60.
● [178] The change from paganism to Catholicism, coupled with technical and cultural developments, has brought about a parallel modification in the conventional form of the 'votiva'—from the baked clay image, the painted panel, and the wax and silver anatomical models to the exquisite examples of the jeweller's art; but the idea behind the changed outward sign remains immutable, i.e. the anxiety-relieving value of faith in a community where belief in an all-controlling God has, for thousands of years, been the pervasive character of the warp and woof of its cultural and psychological pattern.

5: Cremona B-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

The belief still lingers that the
764 lamp must remain lighted for forty days, during which the soul
795 of the departed remains above the flame.

764 (g) Some families give the poor bread. The love-feasts of
735 the primitive Christians were in mediaeval times replaced in
171 both Malta and Sicily by the distribution of cakes and of boiled wheat mixed with sesame. Distributions of meat and bread to the poor came also to be a custom at some *festas*, but were continued in Sicily mainly by the giving of beans and bread on All Souls' Day.[1] In Malta on that day, however, the old custom has been replaced by the free kitchens or the "Potage for the Poor" (*Borma tal-Fqûr*).

765 Mourning customs in Malta have during the last century
178 passed through wide changes and, as in other European coun-
[177] tries, have reverted to a more simple type. Some are purely
[192] mediaeval, and are influenced by the prolonged intercourse with Sicily and Italy during the rule of the Grand Masters. The vernacular term for mourning is *vistu*, corresponding to the Sicilian *visitusu* ("to be in mourning").

765 The wearing of special mourning clothes was general in the
292 fourteenth century, but became less marked by the year 1700.
178 Women used to wear woollen trailing skirts and dark shawls
184 over their heads. Some better-class people wore one black transparent veil over the head and another veil of black silk taffeta over the gown, reaching to the waist. A sort of Majorca woollen cloth is prescribed for mourning wear to the heirs under a will of A.D. 1543. The Grand Master's suite wore a special garment called *Scoto*, of thin light serge. Although it is nowadays customary with some families to put on as little mourning as possible and to shorten its period, a full mourning dress is worn by others for two full years after the death of parents. The simplest style of mourning, a black necktie and a crape arm band, is in general use after the death of a distant relative.

765 Family mourning is generally observed as follows:—
178 I. Closure of business premises, a mourning notice being affixed to the door.
[562] II. Women keep indoors for a few weeks, only going out in

[1] G. Pitrè, *Spettacoli e Feste Popolari*, vol. xii. p. 407.

5: Cremona B-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the early morning to hear mass. In old times such seclusion was much more strictly observed, and the period was never less than forty days. For men this sort of mourning did not exceed seven days, and is now generally limited to three days, after the funeral.

III. Old custom prohibited cooking for three days, and the family of the deceased was provided with meals by friends or distant relatives. This rule was, and perhaps is still, followed in some districts of Sicily and amongst Arab tribes of Northern Africa. While meals were being served the bereaved family sat with folded legs on the floor, which was covered with a straw mat. The historian Ciantar relates in 1772 that these mourning dinners still took place in his early days. This custom has now been discontinued, and our village people merely abstain from having their pastry and other food prepared in a public oven for a period of some months after the death of a member of the family.

IV. Men often do not shave for a fortnight or even a month. This practice was more in favour in old times. Middle and lower class people keep away from *festas*, and the higher class from theatres, dancing, and merrymakings.

V. People of rank wear a mourning dress for a few days following a death in their family, but country people are satisfied with wearing a black felt hat and a dark sash round the waist. Women, if wives or brides, follow the continental style of full mourning dress in crape. Some women do not wear a hat or bonnet during the first week of mourning, and go out in *faldettas*, a national head-covering which is more commonly used when attending religious services. Since the seventeenth century the Maltese *faldetta* has undergone some changes in shape and material. The old *faldetta*, as described by Ciantar, was a black veil or cowl covering the head and reaching to the heels, like the Arab and Sicilian women's trailing mantles. Apparently countrywomen wore a blue linen veil, which is still adopted, for economy's sake, in some of the eastern seaside hamlets of the island, but amongst the lower class in general the black hood, which matrons changed into silk with lace edges, was more common. Bombazine (without lace) or silk *faldettas* are now

5: Cremona B-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Bombazine (without lace) or silk faldettas are now
292 the popular style. The vernacular *čulqâna* and *ghonnella* for
192 the *faldetta* point to its probable origin; the word *ghonnella* is
765 derived from the Italian *gonnella*. The term *falda*, with its
178 diminutive *faldetta* (skirt), suggests that this hood or wimple
301 represents the tail of the skirt put over the head inside out in wet weather. Black stone trinkets are worn in place of those of gold. Women in both villages and towns who cannot afford to buy special trinkets cover their earrings with black stuff.

The old funeral rites, described by Abela and Ciantar from
764 extracts from wills of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries,
[171] are only faint survivals of the gorgeous pseudo-pagan rites
[177] which prevailed in all parts of continental Europe up to the period of the Reformation, and in Malta when under Italian influence. Up to 1872 the burial of the dead generally took
[192] place in churches or in churchyards (Maltese *zuntier*, from French *cimetière*). This still continues in country places, where
[671] people have family vaults. A law providing for extra-mural interment was proposed by De Rohan (A.D. 1775-1797), but it was only enforced by the Police Law of 1869, when a public cemetery was provided in 1871.

764 Since the adoption of the new burial law, funeral customs
178 have assumed a very simple character. Old custom required that the dead body should be placed on a handbarrow or in a coffin with a cushion stuffed with laurel and orange leaves
[534] fixed under the head. The body was then conveyed to the church, with the relatives and friends following, and the wailing of the mourners accompanied by the sound of bagpipes, which in some villages are now replaced by violins and counterbases to which lamentations are sung. Since the opening of the Addolorata Cemetery the dead are generally transported in
[533] hearses. The tolling of funeral bells was once so important that in many wills careful provision was made for it, and it even
[177] rivalled the usual charitable bequests. This corresponds to
764 Sicilian custom in the fifteenth century. After burial of the corpse, a black carpet or coverlet, or a velvet counterpane, was laid over the grave, and left there for some days. The offering
[184] of flowers to the dead is at present in great favour amongst the less educated, but some of the higher class object to it as a pro-

fanation

It has faded very rapidly

only in the course of the past generation in Malta to give way to what may be called commercial farming in which crops, animals or animal products are sold for money.

By using the 1948 Census material (B/167 - 1948, Table 53) it is possible to classify districts on the basis of the proportion of the farming element within the 'gainfully-occupied' section of the population as follows:

Table 1 (v. Map 2)

Urban (0-3%)		Fringe (3-10%)		Inner Rural (10-20%)	
Valletta	0	Balzan	5.48	Mqabba	10.5
Cospicua	0	Luqa	6.1	Marsaxlokk	10.6
Senglea	0	Birkirkara	6.16	Żurrieq	11.15
Vittoriosa	.008	Tarxien	6.43	Gwaxaq	11.29
Gżira	.11	St. Venera	6.46	Attard	11.53
Sliema	.24	Qormi	6.88	*Victoria	13
Floriana	.43	Birzebbuga	7.3	Mdina	15.4
Pawla	.8	Żabbar	7.35	Mosta	16.56
Marsa	1.2	Żejtun	8.27	Żebbuġ	18.41
Hamrun	1.35	Lija	9.9	*Ghajnsielem	19.2
Msida	1.36			Gudja	19.91
Kalkara	1.84				
Pieta	2.6				
St. Julian's	2.9				

Rural (20-50%)		Outer Rural (above 50%)	
Qrendi	20.25	*Kerċem	56.43
Kirkop	22.33	*Xagħra	64
Naxxar	24.8	*Għarb	67.81
Rabat	25.6	*San Lawrenz	68.3
*Xewkija	27.7	*Żebbuġ	70.9
Għargħur	29.1	Mġarr	73.3
Mellieha	34.73	*Għasri	82.7
Siġġiewi	37.63	**Comino	89.47
*Sannat	39.04		
*Nadur	40.9		
Safi	46.87		
Dingli	47.4		
*Gala	47.6		
St. Paul's Bay	47.72		

Malta..... 9.11%
Gozo..... 41.78%
All Islands..... 12.28%

* - Gozo
** - The Island of Comino is statistically part of Gozo.

Clearly such proportional measurement is by no means an indisputable criterion for assessing the 'rurality' of Maltese and Gozitan villages but it provides a satisfactory overall basis for classification and is, as such, used in the ensuing account (Map 2).

Perhaps the most striking feature is the overwhelming significance of agriculture in Gozo. In Malta, by contrast, the Dockyard and other industrial concerns exert an increasing pull towards non-agricultural employment in all but the most remote districts (Map 4). Valletta and the Three Cities (Cospicua, Senglea and Vittoriosa) are the most 'urban', and the northern and western parts of Gozo the most 'rural'. An impression of the changing status of this rural (i.e. farming) element may be gained from the Census Reports since 1842 (B/167) but direct comparison is hindered by differences of tabulation between the census counts. However, the fact emerges that those villages

i.e. peasant subsistence farming. Analyze

178 which are now 'rural' on the basis of the size of the farming
369 element are the old settlements.[4] The non-agricultural Urban zone is a comparatively recent growth around Valletta and the Three Cities and lacks the traditional agricultural basis of most of the Fringe and Rural areas where the villages grew little in size and declined considerably in relative importance.

178 A closer investigation of the declining relative impor-
241 tance of farming within the rural villages themselves over
433 the past hundred years (v. Appendix 1D, vii and Graph)
464 reveals that during some periods economic prosperity in
16 Malta has attracted labour away from the land but, equally, that these moves were largely temporary and that there was a return to farming as soon as boom conditions disappeared. This was the case, for example, during the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the present century (B/381). Since 1931 there has been a general retreat from farming (v. Graph) along with a socio-economic emancipation of the Maltese farmer in which the traditional ties with the land have been loosened. The earlier, temporary moves lacked this social rejection of an old way of life. The farmers who left their fields for industrial work at the end of the nineteenth century were in fact never very far from the land upon which they relied as a stand-by when the boom conditions declined. Today the farmer's son, far from maintaining a foothold in agriculture, is as fast losing touch with the land as he is with the community which it supported. If a depression were to appear along with any limitation in emigration a return to the land would be less easy than in times past. This would be due not to a shortage of land for farming or to difficulty in getting work in farm labouring but to the current estrangement between farmer's son and farming, an estrangement as much sociological as economic in character.

178 The earlier temporary moves from the land were partial
464 rather than total in that the bulk of farmers and farm-workers
241 who had sought urban jobs had come from the Fringe or 'Suburban' areas rather than from the Rural districts proper (B/381). The present move away is however from all parts of countryside. It is evident that both today and in the past the availability of alternative employment has been the governing factor. The earlier periods of economic prosperity mentioned brought only temporary alternative opportunity for
175 the farm-worker. In fact until the present century the
464 only large-scale alternative to field work for the rural
288 Maltese and Gozitan was cotton spinning and weaving. Even here possibilities were limited. Cotton growing and manufacture in the Islands developed fast during the eighteenth

175 288 464 century but went into decline early in the nineteenth, particularly after the Spanish Government prohibited all imports of yarn (1800). But the industry was slow to die and is today undergoing something of a re-birth under a protective monopoly[5]. Cotton provided, during the nineteenth century, much employment, particularly for women who, in 1861, amounted to 96% of all cotton workers (B/167 - 1861). The small male labour force was mainly engaged in the beating and dyeing departments of the industry. This industry moreover, was centred in the villages and was essentially a home craft, so that the worker in cotton was never very far removed from home or farm, and field work was an alternative when cotton production declined. This decline accelerated towards the close of the nineteenth century but was not spread at an even rate over the whole of the rural area of the Islands. The total decline was due to external economic factors but, within the Islands themselves, the industry survived longest in its traditional 'core area' of Rabat and Żebbuġ. "The cotton industry persisted where the skills were greatest - where it now exists as a craft industry" (B/381).

175 178 241 369 464 [288] [396] [504] However the harbour areas and the dockyard were providing work and opportunity on an increasing scale towards the end of the nineteenth century and during the first quarter of this[6]. "The population nearest the harbour profited first, and there was a spreading outwards, as more and more of the Island sought work in the port. As the attraction of the harbour area spread, so interest in the declining cotton industry decreased". (B/381) A new alternative was thus appearing and one very different in that it meant a greater break with home, farm and village than had been the case with cotton. Agriculture itself came to feel the impact of the alternatives. "Gradually the whole Island became drawn into the economic sphere of the harbour area, and the population of the rural area became less and less dependent on agriculture for its livelihood" (B/381). This is a key factor in 178 241 369 an understanding of rural Malta and Gozo today. The second, considered later in more detail, is the social change which has been brought about by the emancipation of the villager 241 433 through direct and indirect education and contact with the people and ideas of the world outside. Together these two forces, the one an extension and magnification of what had happened before on a temporary basis and the other a consequence of the trend towards social enlightenment which has been a widespread feature of the twentieth-century world, have given the farmer an escape. On the economic level he has the new range of employment opportunities indicated, while his newly acquired literacy and education is making it

178 241 369 241 433 178 464 396 433 504 369 possible for the young countryman to follow his economic shift from country to town with a social transplanting out of the close-knit community of the rural village to the cosmopolitan levels of life in the towns.

Along with the increase of employment in the dockyard and harbour there has been a relative decline in agriculture in that an increase in the total numbers of the farming community was accompanied by a shrinking of the agricultural sector within the total gainfully occupied population of the Islands. The Dockyard has grown to become the largest single concern and, in March 1957[7], gave employment to 12,572 Maltese workers (plus a further 417 United Kingdom nationals). The percentage of Dockyard employees in individual districts may be taken as a second possible criterion of 'rurality'. Appendix 2.A, showing Dockyard workers in March, 1957, expressed as a percentage of the employed population, reveals the heaviest concentration round the yards themselves (the Three Cities) and in the Żejtun, Żabbar, Pawla and Kalkara areas of south-eastern Malta. The whole of Gozo supplied only twenty-five workers at that time - this being the same figure as for Santa Vennera, near Hamrun. Nevertheless it is significant that no part of Malta is unrepresented in the Dockyard (Map 4).

464 36 The workers listed in Appendix 2.A are only a part of those employed in the harbour area and the towns and it is to this group that one refers when speaking of the 'draw' of the harbour area and its associated manufacturing and service industries. These include transport of various kinds, shops, cafés and bars, workshops, offices and all manner of public utilities and services.

361 369 162 It is clear that in a definition of 'rurality' the occupational structure, whether considered from a farming or dockyard point of view, is not the sole criterion though the most convenient. One might take, for example, the extent to which each census district is built-over. The 1957 census distinguishes 'township' areas within each district (Appendix 3). The township-dwelling population accounts, as one would expect, for nearly 100% of the total in the Urban zone, but even in the rural districts most people are seen to live within the villages rather than in isolated farmsteads. In terms of area on the other hand the contrast between urban and rural zones is marked. In all three rural zones only five districts show a built-up township area accounting for more than 10% of the total. Richardson considers this nucleated-dispersed aspect of settlement distribution for 1948 and 1931 and notes significant changes in the pattern (R/561).

17 of Malta and Gozo than in the towns, where dockyard develop-
621 ments and other industrialization have produced a new kind of
793 social environment. This is an important subject in itself
795 but, for the present, attention is to be confined to the rural districts where change has to date been slower than in the towns but where the same factors are appearing now along with the rapid 'urbanization' of the villages.

In traditional Malta the function of the clergy[10]
175 extended far beyond matters of religion. The priests were
621 the teachers, doctors, and legal advisors as well as spiritual
793 guardians of the people. Government-organized education began
871 in the nineteenth century. Previously such formal education as there was had been under ecclesiastical auspices. The clergy were literate when almost all the rest of the population was not. This concentration of learning produced a situation in which only the clergy were able to step forward to take the lead among Maltese, for the nobility, which might [669] have been expected to provide a focus and leadership, tended [648] to be more Italian or Spanish than Maltese. Even revolutionary leaders came from the ranks of the clergy; the Mannarino Revolt against the Order of St. John (1775) and the rising against the French during the brief occupation of the Islands by Napoleon (1798-1800) are instances.

175 For some centuries before the arrival of the British in
795 1800, the Church had built up its dominating position in both village and town. Even the educated townsman going to the [874] University came strongly under the influence of the Church, for the University, itself a Jesuit foundation of long standing, was and still is best known for its Theology. However, [178] during the nineteenth century, the major changes within the Church of Malta were connected with purely administrative details of keeping pace with the rapidly rising population[1].

Many new parishes were created in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth. The Archbishopric of Malta was established in 1831 with the separation from the jurisdiction of Palermo, and the Bishopric [178] of Gozo was founded in 1863. A movement of great sociological importance during the present century has been the growth of the Lay Apostolate in the Islands, especially in the urban areas. This represents a counter-attack against the forces which are today tending to detract from the traditional omnipotence of the Church. It is only a matter of time before the problems which the Church is facing in the towns will loom much larger than at present in the country districts and in Gozo[11].

[Village of Mġarr]

By the mid-Thirties Mġarr had become independent of Mosta as a Police area and had been connected to the Telephone network[15]. Other amenities to reach the village about this time included a number of levelled roads, although asphalting did not appear until after the 1939-45 War. During the War years most construction activity was halted. Some 700 refugees from the blitzed harbour areas were billeted in the village; thirty shelters were dug, and about 600 bombs fell in the vicinity of the village destroying two houses and killing three people (R/291). United States' forces camped near Mġarr prior to the Sicily invasion: an Italian aircraft crashed not far away. Mġarr heard about the war and experienced as much of it at first hand as most other rural parts of the Islands lying well away from the Dockyard, air bases and other strategic targets. Food rationing and Government control of production put the farmers of Mġarr in as strong a position as elsewhere but at the worst period of the siege even they were reduced to chewing carob beans[12].

By the advent of the present decade Mġarr had acquired the normal characteristics of community life of village Malta, with Church, school, police station, dispensary and doctor, telephones, and roads. The built-up area has since expanded rapidly. In this present decade, too, the village has gone on to 'catch-up' with older settlements to the extent of establishing the four branches of the Catholic Action movement (Appendix 4). A most modern and well-appointed 'oratory' has for five years been the focal point of Catholic teaching and social work in the Parish. Its theatre holds 700 and shows films on Sundays and special occasions. More recently a commercial cinema has opened in the village but, one understands, it cannot detract from the popularity of the oratory film show.

Within the past few years, shops have appeared in the village which is now independent in this respect for food and general items. Travelling vans, a prominent feature of the countryside, further swell the range of goods available on the spot and are joined in this door to door service by the weekly paraffin (petrolju) vehicle. For other items Mġarr housewives still make the journey to Mosta or Valletta on the buses which operate every few hours; a generation ago their mothers carried bread on their backs each week from Mosta, the parent village.

On account of its recent development, Mġarr lacks certain features found in the larger and much older settlements. The Catholic Action is the only Lay Movement in the village - though it is notably active there, and of the Confraternities which are numerous in the older settlements Mġarr has only three (Appendix 4).

6:Beeley K-5 (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

36 This type of core area therefore, as defined in these examples is the basic pattern in all villages throughout Malta and Gozo.

103 361 • 178 In a consideration of the present scene within the Maltese village it is essential to be aware, at all stages of the argument, of the evolution of the settlements concerned. In the Żurrieq case it is clear that the main village block is extending in several directions, notably northward past the school and south-westward towards the small hamlet of Nigret. This latter is already linked by a continuous built-up stretch to the main village and thus contrasts with Bubaqra which remains morphologically [578] independent. In the case of some of the larger villages, Żebbuġ and Żejtun are two notable examples, the completion of this kind of merging of nuclei accounts for present intra-village sectionalism. Thus Żebbuġ (Malta) is a compound of three ancient village nuclei, Hal Muxi, Hal Mula and Hal Dwieli. The very title of 'Hal', or 'village', still given to these parts of what is now a single village reflects their original separate independence. They have grown together over the centuries and have been unified by the construction of a Parish Church and the appearance of a new 'township' core in the central area. Similarly Żejtun has three component parts, Ta'Fuq (Upper), Ta'Isfel (Lower), and Ta' Wara l-Knisja (Behind the Church): the present large Parish Church has been built in the space remaining between the merging older nuclei. The distinction here is clearly morphological rather than administrative but is nevertheless not to be ignored in a study of social structure and affiliation in a static and conservative community.

Merging between fully independent villages has also occurred. Balzan-Birkirkara and Pawla-Tarxien are examples, but here the administrative and affiliatory distinctions have been maintained. At a higher level still the merging of the settlements comprising the Urban area, begun in the nineteenth century but more rapid in the twentieth, is the major feature of modern settlement growth in Malta (B/561).

Rabat in Malta, and Rabat (Victoria) in Gozo, illustrate another aspect of settlement evolution where morphological [712] facts bear on social structure. In both cases the 'suburb of the citadel' ('Ir-Rabat tal-Imdina') grew to large-village size outside the Walls of the central fortified stronghold of each Island. In Malta, Rabat remained as the main rural centre after the capital had moved to Valletta, with ancient Mdina itself remaining a quiet residential back-water.

000 In Malta the countryman still regards Rabat as an

In Malta the countryman still regards Rabat as 15. an
178 unofficial capital of the rural areas of his Island; markets
361 are still held there even though the main ones have
[443] gravitated to Valletta and the urban area. The annual
'Imnarja', traditionally one of the main events in the
farmers' social calendar, is held nearby[18], while the
ancient importance of the Church is reflected in the large
number of clergy, churches, confraternities and third orders
[712] found there (Appendix 4). In Gozo, Rabat is the adminis-
trative, cultural and economic capital with the old
fortified 'Castello' now in large part a deserted ruin.

369 The differing extent to which the villages of Malta and
178 Gozo have been influenced economically by the industrial and
urban developments of the dockyard areas and towns are
paralleled in the social plane. Traditionally rural centres
such as Qormi, Żabbar and Birkirkara have undergone increasing
social and cultural attraction towards Valletta and the Urban
area along with economic 'de-ruralization' by virtue of their
proximity to the towns and harbours. The improvements in
amenities and especially in transport facilities have tended
to link these Fringe settlements to the Urban area rather
than to the countryside which produced them (B/381).

361 A further type of village is exemplified by St. Paul's
178 Bay. This began as a summer-time resort for town and city
dwellers during the nineteenth century but attained a
sufficient permanence and size to be granted full parochial
status in 1905. The analogy in Gozo is Marsalforn though
this settlement is perhaps half a century behind St. Paul's
Bay in development and presents in winter time the appearance
of almost a ghost-town with only a few permanent farmer and
fishermen residents.

Birżebbuġa is a class on its own, having grown in the
past few decades upon largely non-agricultural foundations
of the British and United States' bases, oil installations
and some small-scale industry.

128 Using this type of analytical approach, a classification
361 of the villages of Malta and Gozo on the basis of their
origin and socio-functional characteristics becomes possible
(Richardson (B/561) goes into greater detail concerning the
evolution of settlement in Malta itself and considers the
development of the present pattern in the light of population
growth and movement and other historical factors.)

712 (1) Medieval Capital Fortresses - Mdina in Malta and
175 the Castello in Gozo. Both occupy central eminences in
[361] their respective Islands and were used as capitals by the
Arabs (in Malta 870-1090) and by the various rulers of Malta
712 between 1090 and the coming of the Knights of St. John in
1530. The former is today a tranquil, residential

311 and west of Malta and the hard rock areas of Gozo many
423 farmers hold rights over waste-land which from the cultivators' point of view is useless". As to size "the range is enormous" but "it is clear that a reduction in the average size of the farms has taken place at all levels". Today "the great majority of holdings (83.5%) are seen to consist of dry land only. A very small proportion, less than half of one per cent, contain irrigated land only. The balance of 16% of all holdings are 'mixed'. The majority of the mixed holdings contain less than 5 tmien of irrigated and less than 20 tmien of dry land".

423 The past hundred years have shown "a general upward
178 trend in the number of land-holders balancing a downward trend in the number of farm workers", while a "factor influencing the numerical increase and progressive reduction in size of holdings has been the long-term expansion of part-time farming".

This picture is made even more complex by the prevailing systems of land tenure and their wide ramifications. This sector has been investigated by Mitchell (B/525). He considers the various types of ownership (Government, Church, private ownership and owner occupation) and the systems of tenure (long and short lease and share cropping, etc.), and traces the land-holding history of one family back through four generations, in order to reveal the way in which the farm-holdings of the members of the various branches of the family have been assembled as the individual farmers have lived and built up their holdings and then dispersed upon death or retirement (in B/337). "Both the methods of acquiring new land and subdividing land already held are seen to result in more scattered and smaller plots".

311 Thus the Maltese farm is characterized by variety of
423 size, tenure, composition and soil types. Moreover, one must distinguish holdings which are primarily livestock supporting, from those essentially arable in emphasis and also from the heterogeneous class which might be called
[128] 'mixed farms'. The present discussion attempts to consider the Maltese farmer as an individual within the agricultural and rural scene and aims to demonstrate the contrasts between the illiterate and the educated, the old-fashioned and the modern, the prosperous and the poor.

THE PROBLEM.

125 This Section considers the dilemma of the Maltese farm today from the point of view of its technical management. The problem soon emerges essentially as the struggle by an uneconomic unit - the Maltese farm - for existence in the already unbalanced total Maltese economy.

241 423 rapidly than does the full-time farmer who often seems to continue working unpracticable fields, which, by present standards, are uneconomic. He continues to work them for reasons which are a mixture of sentimental attachment, force of habit and, quite often, stark ignorance of the fact that the plots concerned are bringing him loss rather than profit. He does not indulge in cost-accounting.

241 464 433 This is the background to the present attempts to rescue Maltese farming from its two main difficulties:

(a) a drastic reduction in the agricultural labour force due to the retreat from the land, especially by the younger generation,

[654] (b) the fact that contemporary Maltese farming cannot produce a profit without subsidies and protection from foreign competition.

654 241 464 The answer to the labour problem is held to be mechanization, along with the education of the farmer in the use of better suited methods, crops, animals, etc., and maximum development of the land by means of low-interest Government loans to farmers. The accepted answer to (b) is in fact not an answer at all but entails the creation of an artificial farming economy in which Government subsidies and guaranteed markets enable the farmer to make some profit where he would otherwise sustain a heavy loss. The cost of this is the price which the Government is willing to pay in order to develop the Islands' only primary industry to the maximum and to encourage the farming community to remain on their farms.

The limited scope of these solutions emerges from the discussions of labour, mechanization and protective subsidies and guarantees which follow.

LABOUR

178 462 [592] The decline of the peasant system in Malta and its replacement by what has been called commercial farming has been accompanied by changes in the family as the operating group within the farm. There has been no strictly formal division of labour by sex in Malta[20] but there is an 'accepted' division and this is important to an understanding of the present socio-economic upheaval in Maltese rural society.

562 462 178 In traditional and peasant Malta woman's place was certainly in the home. An old adage held that "Women should never appear but twice in public: the day they are married and when they are buried" (R/326, Vol. 1, p.80). Even today the countrywoman, especially in Gozo, still divides her activity between home, Church, and the fields worked by the

462 family, while her daughter, literate, emancipated and
562 'progressive' by contrast, wants to take up paid employment
●178 outside the home or even outside the village and insists on a greater measure of social intercourse than would have been proper for her mother.

462 The home and the care of the children remains the sphere
178 of women and girls. The menfolk took part in such work only in exceptional cases, such as illness. Nowadays the men are often more inclined to interest themselves in this side of family life but, as often in a discussion of this nature, the range of divergence of practice defeats generalization.

178 Until recently it was customary for most women and girls
462 to work, unpaid, alongside their menfolk in the fields,
288 especially when work was pressing as at harvest time.
464 Furthermore cotton was the work of women in most stages of its preparation (Section 1), while lace was almost entirely the work of women - particularly those whose age or infirmity excluded them from field work. Cotton is now of minor importance and lace-working is confined to the older
178 generations. The employment vacuum thus created is now
464 partly being filled by young women and girls seeking employment away from the family in clerical jobs, retailing, teaching and domestic service. Fewer work as hired farm-labourers than was the case a generation ago. Yet there remains an increasing number of unmarried girls today, educated far beyond field work, who cannot find employment to suit their aspirations or qualifications, whether because of the scarcity of suitable posts or on account of the attitude that persists in labelling paid employment fo a girl as somehow improper (Case I). Married women are, in any case, discouraged from taking or retaining paid employment throughout Malta (B/598).

241 Some farming families still retain the traditional
462 pattern of field work by the whole family (Case XI);
[178] others do not (Case VIII). In some cases the women and girls work occasionally with their menfolk (Case II). In the fields they are given hoeing, planting, reaping and picking jobs but heavier work and jobs considered skilled, such as spraying with insecticide, are left to the men (v. Case I on the division of family labour).

241 In general it appears that as the younger age-groups
592 are educated and emancipated unpaid field work is avoided.
[178] The only remuneration noted was limited to small 'pocket-
[465] money' donations and even these went to sons working full-time with their fathers (Cases X, XI) and not to daughters. Here then is the problem. The farmer is faced

241 592 (a) with the labour of members of his family limited, in many cases, as far as the women and girls are concerned to casual assistance and to grudging work by his sons until they can find some paid employment away from the home farm, and

241 464 [461] [465] (b) with the high cost of non-family labour at between £1 and 30/- per eight-hour day where a member of the family would have worked from early morning until sundown. Moreover the supply of hirable labour is by no means great nor readily available and, unless a general economic collapse forces a return to the land, there are no indications of any improvement in the position. Rather is agricultural labour likely to become scarcer and more costly.

241 [461] The problem is considerably aggravated by the fact that as already suggested, the particular characteristics of Maltese farming demand an intensive application of manual labour, both in the maintainance of the more precarious fields as well as in cultivation. Something of the detail of this need emerges from a consideration of the timetable of the Maltese farmer both as regards the annual cycle of activity and the daily round of farm-work.

TIMETABLE

221 241 The timetable of the Maltese farmer is more diverse and varied than is at first apparent. It is convenient to distinguish the daily timetable proper from the annual calendar of events. Under traditional peasant farming conditions there appears to have been a much greater degree of uniformity but as farming has been 'commercialized' so has the range of variety increased.

175 178 221 241 The peasant field-tiller depended on climate, on the crop cycle and on the sun. The year's round of field-work a century ago is recorded in an 1849 "Calendario dell'Agricoltore" (B/355) which listed the major farm activities of each month along with short articles on subjects of interest to the farmer of the time. Many of these topics, such as silk, olives, aniseed, cotton, honey, almonds, and tobacco, would not merit such prominence in a modern version of the Calendario[21]. More striking still is the emergence, since 1849, of dairying and stock-rearing, which was scarcely mentioned in the Calendario but has more recently grown to first importance for a large part of the farming community. [234] [233]

178 241 Changes of such magnitude over the century can be expected to affect the routine of farm-work and of village and family life. In the mid-nineteenth century, Maltese farming was still very much more 'peasant' than 'commercial' and the change between then and now becomes clear when a

978
241 modern calendar of events is considered.

As random sample illustrations three farmers' accounts of their own work during 1957-58 are analyzed[22]. At least they reveal something of the variety that now exists between one farmer and the next.

241 (1) A full-time field worker (Case X) usually working
461 with his brother and a nephew and having some irrigable land.
221 An analysis of the routine of this man is given (Case X; E, v. Work Analysis) and, from the same material, Mitchell has made a detailed study of time/labour utilization (B/323). A summary of this, which is on the basis of the ten hours per day worked by each of the three men over the year 1957-8, is also included in Case X.

(2) The second example relates to an arable farmer mainly concerned with irrigated produce (Case XI; E, v. Work [592] Analysis). This man is helped in the fields by his wife and family. The analysis illustrates the main features of this 'irrigated' farmer's year (although in the year studied there was an exceptional loss of time in the Autumn due to storm damage) and should be compared with (1) above. Irrigation accounts for about a quarter of the months May-July but occupies a mere two afternoons in the period November-February. Cutting and reaping accounts for even more time in July than does irrigation: by October plowing is the largest single item apart from "No work (storms)". In November, planting and sowing account for slightly more time than "collecting greenery" and is by far the main work of December (potatoes). General cultivation work occupies much of the next two months but pruning and grafting of vines is the biggest single item of February. The parallel between this and (1) is clear, apart from the special emphasis, on fruit - largely apples - in the former case.

234 (3) A Goats' milk producer with subsidiary cash-cropping
221 (Case II; E, v. Work Analysis) provides the third
461 sample study. In 1957 - 58 this herdsman spent all but thirty afternoons "grazing the goats" - on only one Sunday or 'festa' day did he not go out with his animals. This illustrates an important feature. While Sundays and Holy Days are normally kept free of field-work, work with animals has to be allowed. The herdsmann is consequently much more tied to his farm than is the predominantly arable farmer. He has a set daily schedule of feeding and milking the animals and cleaning out their stalls, etc., and can expect to have to adhere to this especially if he is working alone or with very little help. In fact the herdsman spends a considerable amount of his working year on

234 (i) the grazing mentioned,
221 (ii) cultivation of fodder crops,
461 (iii) tasks connected with the animals such as collecting milk receipts from the M.M.U., cleaning, building and repairing accommodation for the animals, taking animals for slaughter or caring for them if sick.

And this emphasis is even more strongly seen among the increasing number of dairy farmers in Malta relying on cows rather than goats, as a result of current guaranteed milk sales.

The essential difference between herdsman and field-tiller is, thus, that animals require constant attention throughout the year and demand a much more rigid daily schedule. In (3), care of the animals directly or indirectly takes the greater part of every working day.

221 The annual calendar of activities reflects the way in
241 which the farmer's life and work are bound up with the
178 elements which govern his environment. The storm damage of
181 late, 1957, a serious economic set-back, was regarded
[731] fatalistically by the farmer. As soon as possible the normal routine of work was resumed and losses accepted with a great deal of talk but little action. The differences between the annual farming calendar of 1849 and that of today, illustrated by the above three examples, have included the extension of one crop at the expense of another. But even the reasons for such basic changes as the replacement of cotton by potatoes were not understood by the farmer. Cotton, for example, had become so firmly entrenched that only in face of impoverishment was it relinquished. The illiterate farmer suspects any innovation with which he is not familiar on the principle of "Better the evil you know than that you know not". He lives in a world where he sees himself fighting against forces over which he has no control. These include the climate, the Maltese economy, foreign trade conditions and, particularly, "them" - otherwise "Il-Gvern" or the Government and officialdom in general. He is also competing with his fellow farmers, but with the ways and wiles of these he is better acquainted.

241 This whole question of mental 'attitudes' to external
46 factors is held to be crucial in a study of illiterate
178 or recently-illiterate farming folk and is given further
181 consideration (Section 4). Suffice it at this stage to emphasize its importance in understanding the apparently illogical or irrational element which creeps into such a basic part of farming as the use of time. This becomes clear when a detailed cost-accounting of man/hours against productivity is made. Much of the work done is uneconomic in the sense that a great amount of time is spent with no

241 461 178 181 direct result. The farmer in (1) spends more than a fortnight each summer gouging tree pests from his apple orchard, a tedious and monotonous task for which the cost would be enormous if any account were made of the labour involved. He has always accepted this task as one of the essential jobs in his fields, presenting itself each year as regularly as the seasons. Today he is wondering whether the same result might not be achieved within the space of a few hours by the application of some spray treatment (Case X).

241 461 This is certainly not to suggest that the Maltese farmer has ever consciously wasted his time. The opposite is the case. Visitors to Malta and Gozo since the eighteenth century have been full of praise for the farmers of the Islands and for their diligent industry. The fact is that the physical limitations of the fields and farms are such that agriculture in the Islands has been maintained and developed only by the application by the farmer of meticulous hand-labour. [464] Today a critical shortage of this very labour is producing a state of doubt and tension in the industry. The question is being posed as to whether some forms of mechanized development can replace traditional manual labour. In view of the characteristics of the rural landscape of the Islands possibilities seem limited.

241 461 178 The farmer's daily timetable, with its long hours of monotonous toil for comparatively little remuneration, is producing a younger farming generation embittered with their inability to do a day's work on the farm in eight hours only and frustrated because independence - in their terms - is denied them. They are tied to the farm and the animals and unable to take as much leisure as their counterparts in 'urban' jobs. Independence for them implies the freedom to take time off from the farm in which to make themselves socially as 'urbanate' as possible. Independence for their fathers' generation is not the same thing. Here is seen a vestige of the traditional peasant way of life which was essentially independent in its family and village self-sufficiency. Thus the old farmer's concept of independence is the ability to rule himself and to work his long hours as he inclines. The liberty to sit with his goats between siesta and sunset, with no foreman and no questions, is in fact part of the attraction which keeps the older farmer in farming at all. It is by no means the whole story because he knows well enough that in his case it is too late to think of acquiring any of the education which he sees as the key to things better than farming. The younger generation do not see things in this light at all and regard their education as a means of escape (Section 1).

000 except in one case (Case IX).

241 234 512 214 262 The evening meal is generally smaller than the lunch although consisting of much the same elements - a thick stew ('brodu' or 'minestra'), along with bread, cheese, fruit, olives, tomatoes, etc. The consumption of meat and fish is in part governed by religion and in part by price and availability, though meat certainly figures much more prominently in the rural diet than formerly. The meal is taken soon after the return from the fields, about 6.30 p.m. and is followed, an hour or so later by the saying of a family Rosary before retiring for the night about 8.0 p.m. In Gozo there is a tendency for people to rise, eat, work and retire to bed rather earlier than in the larger Island and the smaller villages are usually dark and quiet by 7 p.m.

241 234 512 Apart, therefore, from external factors, such as M.M.U. collection or Church service timings, the daily timetable of the farmer and the herdsman depends to a large degree on his own volition. He knows what work is outstanding and can decide how and when he will do it within the limits imposed by the season, demands of animals, and so on. Thus, at a peak period of field-work, such as harvest, the farmer and his assistants may work on until the late evening - even through the night. During exceptionally heavy rains, as in October 1957, work on anything approaching the normal scale is, on the other hand, impossible and the farmer's day becomes one of doing what he can and complaining copiously meanwhile.

241 512 461 Midge (B/516, p.236), writing in 1840, was impressed by the regular and assiduous labour of the Maltese farmer, even during the heat of the summer sun. "Il semble impossible, au premier abord, que le paysan maltais puisse résister aux chaleurs intenses de l'été. Cependant, au milieu des champs, dès le lever du soleil, on le voit, exposés à ses brûlants rayons, continuer tout le jour ses pénibles travaux. Il fait deux pauses: la première à huit heures; il se repose alors une demi-heure pour déjeuner; la seconde à onze heures; c'est l'instant de son dîner frugal, après lequel il se repose de nouveau jusqu'à midi en hiver, et jusqu'à une heure en été, tantôt à l'ombre d'un figuier, tantôt au pied du petit mur qui entoure le champ, la tête couverte d'un bonnet de laine, et le reste du corps exposé au feux du jour. Il reprend ensuite ses travaux avec la même vigueur, et ne se retire qu'au signal donné par la cloche de son village, c'est à dire au coucher du soleil".

572 241 234 178 The essentials of the daily round of the farmer have changed little since Midge wrote except in so far as the tremendous increase in the importance of stock-rearing and

178 241 234 512 milk production (notably the growth in the number of dairy cattle in the Islands) has produced a new kind of operator in Malta, the cows' milk producer, for whom field work is secondary and then based primarily on the production of fodder for his animals and fruit and vegetables for the family.

512 527 796 [241] [234] Sundays and Feast Days bring a break in the routine. Work in the fields lapses but animals still have to be milked and fed. On festa days the whole village goes en fête and to Church. A procession of religious images, members of religious orders, priests, penitents and others to the accompaniment of fireworks and brass bands blaring through the bustle in the narrow streets and alleys fills the evenings of these not infrequent days of festa, fast and feast. These Holy Days and holidays have been the traditional breaks in the round of hard and heavy working [178] [575] days. The present younger generation still enjoys the merriment and processing of these occasions but the Band Clubs have lost for them something of their position of fifty years ago, and the cinema and bright lights of [461] Valletta provide alternatives and additions to the range of possibilities. The young villager of today wants time off not only on festa days but on ordinary working days as well.

527 796 562 575 The village festa is a communal celebration. Both men and women can share in the religious and social aspects. The Band Clubs established in the most villages during the past hundred years have however been solidly masculine (B/521). Other recreations of the farming community are 517 largely masculine pastimes such as shooting small birds, gossipping in the village squares and bars or at the M.M.U. collection depôt, watching the races at the Marsa course or arguing prices at the Sunday morning market 'Fuq il-Monti' 517 in Valletta. In Gozo the big assembly early each Sunday 443 morning in 'It-Tokk', the main square of Victoria, is the scene of much buying, selling and talking by villagers from all parts of the Island who come each week to the capital [184] [494] but rarely visit other villages. The focal pattern resembles that in Malta, where the bus routes converge on the Urban area and Valletta but provide comparatively little inter-village transport (B/381).

178 241 Dissatisfaction with the way of life outlined above, whether for economic reasons (the small remuneration per man/hour of effort), or social considerations (the low status of the farmer, fisherman and other country people) is producing a younger generation anxious to escape if at all possible from following in the footsteps of their fathers and, thereby, accentuating the problem of how the farms of Malta and Gozo are to continue operating.

[178] [241] farms of Malta and Gozo are to continue operating.

It is hoped that some at least of the answer to this problem will come from co-operation and mechanization. The first implies the pooling of labour resources of individual farmers while the latter includes the whole range of developments leading to a replacement of hand labour, as far as possible under Maltese conditions, by machinery or by more efficient implements.

CO-OPERATION

[241] [476] Co-operation in field work between farmers is not new in Malta[23]. It is either permanent, where two or more farmers combine with each other to work a single farm unit, sharing profits and expenses, or temporary, as when two or more farmers share the use of a threshing machine at harvest.

An example of the permanent type is a case (Case VIII) where five brothers work one farm-unit as a team with one of their number being something of a primus inter pares. This [234] is an efficient and profitable arrangement with a substantial income accruing from the herd of some thirty head and the 70 tmien of land worked by the partnership.

Another case (Case XI) is that of two unrelated farmers working one farm-unit as partners after a lifetime's friendship. So completely are their resources pooled that it is not always clear what belongs to the one and what to the other. With their respective eldest sons (teenagers) these [233] two men operate a holding of some 100 tmien and have in [234] recent years joined in the change-over from goats to cows. Their joint herd now numbers some forty head, but as an economic unit is in a much inferior position to that of the first example.

A third example (Case X) shows two brothers working the fields held by them together but maintaining clear distinctions as to which brother owns which plot. This association has also endured for decades and now includes the full-time assistance of the eldest son of the brother.

An example of a temporary association is that where two or more farmers combine to thresh the grain of each man in turn, six being the optimum number for a threshing team which normally includes the owner-operator of the hired [178] threshing machine himself working as one of the team. In the days when the traditional threshing floor with the mule and hand-winnowing was the standard method of threshing (as before the 1939-45 War) different farmers would also join and help each other at the harvest. (Today this threshing floor method is confined to cases where a long straw is required.)

ooo Direct hiring of implements from a contractor as against

241 Direct hiring of implements from a contractor as against
494 exchange of labour between farmers is becoming increasingly common, while a recent development has been the tractor co-operative in which a number of farmers share a cultivator or tractor which they own in common.

MECHANIZATION

178 The first large tractors made their appearance in Malta
407 in the 1930s (Case XV, XXII) but "at that time there was a general feeling against the use of such machines on the land and it was about five years before their value was acknowledged and suspicions overcome"[12]. [427] One of the earliest tractor-hire businesses (Case XV) began in 1935 and for a [422] decade there were comparatively few competitors. Since the 1939-45 War however, the number of farmers and others owning agricultural tractos and mechanized implements[24] has increased to about thirty in Malta[25] and some twelve in Gozo (1957). A sample survey of these tractor operators[26], made in 1957, revealed that the number of such machines is still increasing but the work available for them is decreasing. This is clear from a consideration of the points raised in Cases XV to XII (Section 6, Part 2).

The main points emerging were

(a) There are too many large tractors for the work available. In some cases, Government control was recommended (Case XVI), while in Gozo it appeared the contractors had themselves limited their own spheres of operation by agreement (Case XXII).

(b) The great increase in the number of hand-operated rotary cultivators was fast putting the large tractors out of business for two reasons

(i) the machines are small, more manoeuvrable in tiny fields and can be used during the greater part of the year - even in wet weather,

(ii) costing only some few hundred pounds they can [654] be bought by large numbers of individual farmers - especially since low-interest loans are now available from the Government.

(c) The limited area of land suitable for working with a deep-plow in the Islands. Many fields are too small or too inaccessible for such big machinery - though they can comfortably accommodate the small rotary cultivators.

(d) The exclusion of tracked vehicles from public highways (unless 'shod' or moved by lorry) irritates the contractors who frequently have to travel long distances between asignments (Case - XVII).

178 (e) The high costs of fuel (Case - XVII) and the
407 frequent need of spare-part replacements on account of damage.

(f) The increasing area being put to vines (Case - XX).

The advantages of tractor-plowing to the farmer include

407 (i) the speed of operation, in contrast with the
427 traditional single-furrow wooden-plow working. Costs are therefore relatively cheap. They average about 15/- per tomna for tractor plowing and about £1 per hour for the hire of a threshing machine. Rotary cultivators can themselves be hired at between 10/- and 12/- per hour. A job which would take a mule and plow a whole day is done in a matter of minutes by the mechanical plows.

[461]

407 (ii) the tractor-plow, or the rotary cultivator,
461 make it possible for one man to work a larger area than if
464 he had to rely on his own labour and hand-implements (Case - XX). To this extent such mechanization is solving the problem of labour shortage.

429 For the contractor himself there is a social as well
554 as financial profit deriving from his machines. He has come to be regarded as rather higher in the social plane than the hand-labouring farmer. But his financial status is also clearly far above that of the field worker with no implements and his remuneration per man/hour of effort far greater despite the limitations outlined above. The main disadvantage is the short plowing season over some three summer months or less. Some contractos hire their machines and services to builders and others out of the plowing season (Cases - XIV and XVII) while others own a threshing machine which brings in further contracts in the summer (Case XVII).

[221]

178 From what has been said it would appear that the large
407 tractor is not the answer to the labour problems of Maltese
427 farming, although it may bring considerable profit and advancement to the few dozen operators themselves. The present decline in this type of contracting has been noted. Charlton (B/381) maintains that this decline would be greatly accelerated if there were any large-scale return to the land in the near future. The small hand rotary cultivator is meeting with much more success and looks like going much further along the way to enabling a time/money conscious Maltese farmer to cultivate an adequate area with little or no paid hand-labour. Even this is however clearly limited by the point made earlier that the Maltese farming landscape has been built up by hand labour and much of it can only be maintained by that same meticulous attention.

[434]

242 and information centre to which the farmer may turn for
654 advice and material help. Much discussed by the farming community in 1958 were the plans for a proposed artificial insemination centre to help in the improvement of stock in the Islands along with the provision of an efficient stud (Section 4). The early stages of the Advisory Service are outlined in B/252.

178 Thus a lot has been done and a great deal more said
241 about farming in Malta and its improvement and modification
654 to bring it more closely into line with present conditions
181 both in Malta and abroad. The farmer's characteristic conservatism has to be overcome at every stage (v. Section 4)
[234] but where he sees a clear prospect of quick profit he is not slow to move. The outstanding example of this is the guaranteed milk sale through the M.M.U. which, in the space of a few years, has produced a revolution in dairying in the Islands.

433 The herdsman is not concerned with an increasing milk
654 surplus in the Islands as a whole. While the guarantee
234 remains he will continue to put every effort into selling more gallons each day and to subordinating cash-cropping to fodder production in his fields (Cases I to IX). It is certainly keeping him in farming but it is not, apparently, having the same effect on his son.

SECTION 3 : The Farmer and Living Standards

MONEY

433 In the early nineteenth century the Maltese farmer was
434 a 'peasant' in the sense that he was engaged in small scale
178 subsistence farming with the help only of his family.
[175] Economically and socially he saw little beyond his family, farm and village. There were very few wants which could not be supplied at home, or at least within the village. In 1958 one heard of a now almost mythical Maltese countryman of a hundred years previously whose annual expenses in terms of money totalled 6d ; 3d for paraffin and 3d to have his horse shod! Today, the farmer who spoke thus of his predecessor receives about £300 for the milk which he sells each year (Case I) as but one item in a present annual turnover of several hundred pounds which characterizes modern 'commercialized' agriculture in Malta where the farmer produces for sale. He still provides much of the food for his family but he is no longer a peasant.

178 Thus the place of money provides a basic distinction
436 between the present 'commercialized' position and that which
437 prevailed under traditional peasant farming. A century ago money and financial transactions in general featured only

178 to a limited extent in the life and work of the average
436 farmer, and barter as a medium of exchange had a far greater
437 importance than in recent decades. Family labour within
465 the home went unpaid, but even where wages were paid they were very small indeed, both relatively and absolutely when compared with modern amounts (Section 2). Examples, for comparative purposes, are given by the 1836 Royal Commissioners (B/184), Midge (B/516) and Price (B/556), but even as late as 1911 a day's wages in farm-work might
178 have been something of the order of 1s 3d (B/186). From
454 this same report however, it is learnt that the farming community had by that date become investment conscious and had passed through a sequence of stages:

(a) hoarding "their small capitals" (B/186-12473),
(b) investing in jewellery,
(c) saving with the aim of buying a house,
(d) depositing in savings banks towards this aim,
(e) "Now they want bigger interest than the banks will give them and they are investing in foreign bonds" (B/186-12475).

178 The changed place of money in Maltese rural society
465 today is exemplified by the field labourer of fifty years
[461] ago who received 1s 3d for a dawn-to-dusk working day where his grandson now expects 25/- or 30/- for a limited eight hour day, if he can be persuaded to indulge in field work at all. The developments observed by the 1911 Commissioners were by no means general among the rural population at that time. They were in fact merely the
178 first limited signs of what was to come. However, between
433 1911 and 1939 the Maltese farmer moved steadily towards
722 the commercialism of today. The Second World War brought
465 siege conditions of shortage which put the food producer in Malta in a more commanding position than ever before. He could expect very high guaranteed prices for his produce - or even higher ones on the black market. Farmers became used to the idea of big financial returns for their labour.
[454] Some were able to effect substantial savings under distorted war-time market conditions, but more widespread still was the feeling, which carried on after 1945, that farming in Malta ought still to produce, in competitive peace-time, the profits of war time shortage.

178 The major underlying socio-economic trend has been
511 the great expansion in the range of demands of the countryman. The traditional peasant subsistence farmer was content to live off his own farm as suggested above but the change to 'commercialism' in his farming along with his social emancipation has widened the sphere of considered needs. Diet has become more varied and now includes a variety of food items not produced locally: clothing

178 standards demanded have risen: and luxuries, once almost
511 unheard of, are now becoming part of the expected pattern of the life of the countryman (Section 2). For most of these new needs the farmer has required money. Hence progress, to him, has become synonomous with the acquisition
178 of more money. Branches of banks have appeared in some
511 villages in both islands since 1945 and the countryman is
454 coming to accept this means of storing his accumulated
[453] wealth. The concern for bigger interest, first noted by the 1911 Commissioners, is replacing the traditional mere accumulation of wealth whether in money or in jewellery and other valuables.

178 There is still, however, a very strong element of
18 accumulation rather than investment in the finances of the
454 farmer. This is particularly the case with the older
51 generation who, as always, cling to the ways of the past because their lack of formal education makes them, apparently, unable to comprehend or adapt themselves to the workings of the present. Thus it is held that, while the younger generation have sought to urbanize themselves socially and economically with the money which now comes their way, many of the older generation, that is to say those who are tending to stay in farming today, have taken the 'new' money but have not changed their way of life or living standards to anything like the same extent. Thus dress, for example, is no sure indication of a farmer's wealth in terms of money and one hears of bare-foot, shabbily clothed countrymen with savings of £1000 or more. In traditional Maltese village society the uniformity which was the keynote (Section 1) encouraged the farmer to appear like his neighbour lest he be accused of deviationary tendencies: this feeling is often revealed today in the reluctance of the farmer to be the first to try a new method or crop in his fields for fear of becoming a laughing-stock.

Although the older generation do not strive to demonstrate their wealth in dress, habits, a new house, etc., and do not share the anxiety of the younger villager that he should look like a townsman and move to a 'good' - i.e. non-rural - district, their saving is not completely without aim. To resolve this point fully it would be necessary to consider the whole complex of traditional Maltese village society but for the present discussion some major features only will be outlined.

178 Dowry is one feature of traditional Maltese society
583 which is currently assuming different proportions to those
183 earlier held. It was regarded in the past as essential

178 583 183 [554] for a man to provide his marrying daughter with as substantial a dowry as possible. This was partly in kind: land, animals, etc., and partly in money. The size of a girl's dowry was one of the indications of social position and for many a poor man the provision of it would represent sacrifice and saving over many years, especially where there were several marriageable daughters in one family. In the past, many farmers' sons could expect to find brides among the families of the same village and farming background. [182] Thus a dowry of land or other property was an admirable way of building a farm-holding and was one of the counters to fragmentation consequent upon the system of land inheritance (B/525). Such an arrangement caused the minimum disruption in work and residence. However, as contacts between parts of the Islands have increased and marriages between individuals from different villages and also from differing economic backgrounds have become more common, a dowry of land is often quite inappropriate. Money takes its place and the desire for financial accumulation on the part of the fathers of girls of marriageable age leads them to put more emphasis on money and its investment.

178 454 423 471 Another development which has put money into an altogether new perspective for the Maltese farmer has been his growing desire to own the house in which he lives. As seen (Section 2), most of the land worked by the farmers in the Islands is not owned by the operator concerned and this applies to the farm buildings and the house occupied by the family. As the farmer becomes ownership-conscious the first step is understandably to acquire his own home, a feature observed by the 1911 Commissioners. Having bought his house, the farmer turns his attention to the purchase of other parts of the land which he cultivates, but, even before doing this, he wants capital to enable him to build up the live-stock side of his holding. The importance of meat and dairy stock-raising (v. Section 2) has increased rapidly in recent years - especially since the 1939-45 War, and the need for capital in such cases is clearly much greater than in a farm unit based solely on arable cultivation where lease- or rental-holding is a convenient and accepted method of tenure (B/525).

178 454 [426] Similarly, the spread of mechanization in Maltese farming after 1945 (v. Section 2) brought in a need for capital. The Government added to this money consciousness with financial encouragement to farmers (in an effort to keep them on the land) in the form of very low interest loans for capital improvements of the farms and their equipment. The Government policy in connexion with milk

178 (the guaranteed price system for milk sold to the M.M.U.)
554 has had a similar effect. It has encouraged the farmer to
[234] turn to milk production and to increase his herd to the maximum (Section 2).

178 Briefly therefore, the position is that the farmer in
511 Malta and Gozo is now faced with a variety of factors
434 tending to make him money conscious to a degree unknown to his grandfather - who spent the 6d per year already mentioned. These factors basically underly the complex of socio-economic changes which have brought and are bringing improved living standards, "emancipation" and a greater range of demands:

(a) In diet, clothing, recreation and 'luxury' fields the farmer is demanding more than before, and this means money.

(b) The traditional pre-occupation with saving has been diverted towards the saving and investment of money rather than the accumulation of kind. Dowry is one example.

(c) The raised circumstances of the farmer have made him anxious to own his farm, and especially his house and (with the recent emphasis here) his animals.

(d) Anxious to get the most out of his holding within the present commercial system he is keen to develop his farm by acquiring machinery (with possible help from a Government loan) or by making some capital
[464] improvement. Suffering from shortage of labour, he wants to be able to pay hired farm labour the high wages demanded. His own children work away from the home farm.

[722] (e) The artificially distorted market conditions in siege and war-torn Malta between 1939 and 1945 put the farmer in a commanding financial position, which he continues to regard nostalgically as a Golden Age of Maltese farming. He has never fully been reconciled to his now changed position.

DEBT

178 Thus, where the peasant farmer of a century ago saw in
434 his farm the means of providing for the various needs of
[471] the family, the modern farmer in Malta regards his holding, his animals, and equipment, as the means whereby he can make the money which he needs to buy more new items, to expand
[484] his property and to build up his capital reserves. This is the picture as it would be ideally and as it is for a very small section of the farming community: one of the major problems of Maltese farming today is that it is by no means the position among the great bulk of the rural and farming
178 population of the Islands. If, having observed the present
426 position of money and the demands upon which it is based,
434 one turns to a more detailed examination of the financial status of the Maltese farmer the true nature of the problem emerges. Far from acquiring the money which he expects,

6:Beeley K-5 (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

be suffering from economic near-strangulation because the working of his farm-unit is linked with a fluctuating but permanent element of debt. This is because the factors mentioned above as producing the need and demand for money are operating, but the farmer and his farm-unit are unable to hold their own in the present agricultural economy of Malta; this in spite of the artificial boosts of Government loans, guaranteed prices, free gifts, agricultural development schemes, information services, etc.,(Section 2).

178 434 There is a range therefore between the farmer who is proving able to advance financially and he who is not, even to the state of impoverishment. The problem of the latter may be considered from two view-points, the economic and the social. Economically, the difficulty is clear. Many farm units as they exist today cannot hope to provide an income, after expenses have been met, which will support the family and allow of expansion or even maintainance of the unit. The social problem is less easy to define. It would appear that many characteristics of the traditional peasant farming system of subsistence and independence of each farm unit still remain beneath an often thin veneer of [R12] commercialization and modernization. This is related in large part to the lack of education of the farmer himself. The farmer of today in Malta is an old man and ageing who has been but little affected by the developments in education, in its widestsense, which are turning the ambitions of the present younger generation of the farming community towards the towns and towards non-agricultural pursuits. At heart, the present Maltese farmer is still in very many cases <u>thinking</u> as a peasant, isolated and independent, in a farming system now essentially commercial, competitive yet inter-dependent. Financial profits and losses now rule his life but the farmer is, in a disturbingly large number of cases, partly unable and partly unwilling to adapt himself and his farm to the new conditions.

178 234 434 Something of the effect of the both the economic and social aspects of the problem may be gathered from a study of a number of sample cases:

426 (a) A goats' milk producer, living just within the boundary of the Urban area of Malta (Case V), operated during 1957 with a persistent debt on the maintainance of his animals, the basis of his livelihood. During the year, the milk production of his herd varied between 70 and 30 lbs per day. This was sold for the official guaranteed prices and to this extent may be seen as a constant element. Produce from the tomna of land held by the [451] farmer was used in the home but made only a minor contribution to the food budget. This man keeps no accounts of the costs of maintainance of his herd and profits therefrom. He is operating in a perpetual state of debt. A table of

178 his income from milk sold and expenses on fodder during
234 nine months of 1957 (Case V, Summary) illustrates the
434 progress of this debt. He looks back nostalgically to
426 the days when his father sold milk from door to door in
[654] the Urban area and complains bitterly of his present poverty. Incongruously, however, he insists that he fully realizes that without the present Government guarantee (through the M.M.U.) he could not operate at all. He probably does realize this.

(b) Another case of operation within permanent debt is provided by two cows-milk producers who work together as a unit (Case IX) with three dozen head of cattle and a total area held of about 100 tmien used primarily for the production of fodder for the herd. They claim that the debt factor makes it impossible for them to organize their farm and herd as they would wish. For example, while they fully realize the profit to be gained by rearing calves and selling fully grown animals, they are in fact forced to sell even female calves (which they would otherwise keep) in order to pay instalments towards the cost of cows or to pay off part of the debt outstanding to the fodder merchants. This debt position makes them reluctant to take on any further loan commitments: nevertheless the Government loan offers at only 1% are definitely attractive, as a means whereby they would be able to increase the number in their herd and also mechanize their field-work without making their debt
178 position appreciably worse. Behind all this it is clear
234 that they are basing all their hopes on the guaranteed milk
434 price offered by the M.M.U. and they are therefore intent
654 on accumulating animals and thereby supplying the M.M.U with as much milk as possible.

They have no thought or care as to what might happen were the official guaranteed price to go, along with the subsidy which supports it. In fact they have singularly little appreciation of the total picture of which they form part and will be content to grumble quietly and
[212] ignorantly as long as the present artificial situation brings them a steady income. They are both illiterate (Case IX).

(c) An illiterate farmer and herdsman (Case VI)
178 keeps no accounts of the finances of his farm working.
434 The money of the household is "kept in one purse" from
454 which all expenses, farm maintainance and improvement,
234 household expenses and all 'extra' items such as the
654 provision of dowries and wedding costs, etc., are met.
[451] This farmer admits to having been able to save more than £1000 as a result of the 1939-45 War but observes that today they "have a hard job to earn the daily bread". He claims that the savings had all gone by 1958 - partly on improvements to the house but mostly on the purchase of cows as part of his grand design to join the hundreds of other farmers in Malta and Gozo striving to ride on the crest of the wave of the M.M.U. guaranteed price for all milk produced. It is held that this pattern is typical of Maltese farming, and particularly dairying, today. The main energies of the farmer are devoted to making as large a profit as he can while the artificially-supported market for milk is maintained.

178 (d) A literate part-time farmer (Case XIII) keeps
434 accounts of the working of his farm. His second employ-
241 ment brings him in over £5 per week for all but a few
[511] weeks of the year and at the expense of only a small amount of his time and effort. In a normal year he reckons to make an income of about £450 of which about a third goes in costs of seeds, transport and manure, etc. and a further £50 in hiring labour. On account of the steady income from his other job farming has something of the quality of a hobby, a pursuit to be followed

178 434 241 because he has always been used to doing it and one which enables him to provide many of the food items needed by the family. Moreover he feels that his sons, who emigrated some years ago, will eventually wish to return to Malta and will be still enough attracted to the way of life which bred them to want to cultivate a small piece of land themselves during their retirement.

For this man, therefore, farming lacks the character of the bitter struggle with debt which it has for (a). To this extent he is typical of the large and growing number of part-time farmers in Malta today whose livelihood is provided by their non-agricultural job but who maintain a sort of residual interest in the land both as the source of 'extras' and as a link with the farming community from which they are but one generation, or less, removed.

156 241 426 The link with the land, mentioned under (d), gives both the full- and the part-time farmer a sense of independence to which he clings despite the inadequacies of farming from the economic point of view. This sense of independence is revealed in cases where the farmer is not prepared to consider taking a loan, even from the Government at only 1% interest, partly because, as he says, he is "not used to it", but rather perhaps because the variable fortunes of farming (crop failure, storm damage, market fluctuations, etc.) might make him unable to continue payment of the interest on the loan. He wants to be beholden to no-one. Even the house in which he lives was bought by him from his own savings without the help of loans (d).

THE FAMILY BUDGET

472 511 It appears that MONEY is a variable but important factor in the operation of the modern Maltese farm as an economic or uneconomic unit. Money within the household, as distinct from the farm, merits further consideration.

As already suggested, there is generally no clear distinction made by the farmer between the finances pertaining to his farm and those of his family and its maintainance. The most common practice is for there to be "one purse" (Cases VI and X). Into this go all profits from sale of produce or livestock and out of it come the costs of running farm and household. As seen, the farm unit itself is not run with a budget in most cases and there is rarely any attempt on the part of the farmer to cost-account the working of his farm as far as the labour of his family and himself is concerned (Case X). Similarly it is still the exception rather than the rule to find a herdsman who keeps cost accounts of his milk production. In many cases he knows he is making a loss, though of the details he has no notion. In carrying on his farming under these conditions he seems

[451]

472 to be suffering from a mixture of inertia and pure inability
571 to organize the accounts of his business. In some cases he
[65] is compelled to put forward an outline statement for income
[157] tax assessment but generally his illiteracy and suspicion makes him unwilling to trust other individuals with details of his income and expenditure.

571 Within the family, however, this suspicion does not
454 normally exist. In fact the housewife tends to have full
[593] call on the contents of the "one purse" although in only a few cases was it found that she was making any detailed attempt at budgeting for the expenses of her home and family. As with the operation of the farm so with the home, the money is dispensed as demanded but all the time the instinct to save, observed by the 1911 Royal Commissioners (B/186), is there. The traditional peasant idea is
[178] that a large hoard of money or valuables will serve as an insurance when the expected depression arrives. Despite the opinion of the 1911 Commissioners, the notion that the saved capital would be better invested, possibly in capital equipment, is only now spreading to a considerable part of the farming community of the Islands.

511 In the day-to-day expenses of the traditional Maltese
437 village household, barter played a considerable part.
178 Today instances of it are rare and money is the fully accepted medium of exchange. As already indicated the Maltese farmer is not so far removed from his peasant past as may at first sight appear to be the case and one of the basic aims of his farming is still the provision of food
[433] for his family. The average farm in Malta, whatever its basis (stock, dairying or field produce), usually strives
[294] to produce as much of the food needs of the family as possible, though the provision of the family's clothing, as in the past when home-grown cotton was spun and woven to make clothes for the members of the grower's family, is no longer attempted.

262 Thus the food bought in by the farmer's wife includes
438 the 'new' items of diet which cannot be grown on the home farm: preserves, processed cheeses, spaghetti and farinaceous pasta, processed meats, tea, coffee, and evaporated milk (inordinately popular throughout the Islands).
[656] Flour rationing since the early part of the 1939-45 War has killed bread making as a home industry. Meat, except for rabbit, fowl and small birds, has to be purchased, as all
[433] slaughtering is Government-controlled. The farmer does aim to produce the basic vegetables - potatoes, beans, peas, pumpkins, melons, tomatoes, onions, garlic, artichokes, endives, celery, cucumber, carrots, and fruits - oranges, apples, lemons, figs, peaches, etc., required by the family.

262 369 In respect of diet an important distinction between town and country emerges. In the towns the diet is essentially 'Italian' with the full complement of spaghetti and other pasta dishes while 'English' food is now also readily available; but in the country districts there is notably less pasta and its place is taken by potatoes and other vegetables. The townsman who has in any case to buy all his food has accepted Italian ideas on diet with certain local, Maltese modifications, but the countryman, still able to produce much of his own food, clings to vegetables for the bulk constituents of his diet. Bread is however a staple of both town and country (v. Section 2).

272 273 262 511 A range of soft drinks, commercial wines, spirits (whiskey is very popular throughout Maltese society) are now standard elements in the diet, while luxury foods such as chocolate, biscuits and the wide range of sweet cakes ('qaq') are further examples of items which have now established themselves as needs and, consequently, as demands on the family purse.

178 291 Nowadays clothes (or at least the materials from which they are made) are bought by the housewife. This in itself has produced a minor revolution in rural economy. Traditionally the simple garments of cotton cloth were made at home or at least within the village and were worn by the field worker until they could be worn no more. Today a new range of clothing demands have appeared. The farmer now wants better clothes and footwear, but the greatest change is among the younger farming generation who want to dress like the youths of the towns. The retail sale of clothing in the rural districts has expanded rapidly, especially since the 1939-45 War years brought in the widespread use of military surplus material.

423 362 511 Housing is important in the present consideration because money is now being spent by the farmer both on buying his own house where he can but also on developing it and improving the furnishings.

[178] Having seen the comparatively well-appointed town dwellings he is not content with his poor country cottage.

178 511 There is also a wide range of incidental luxury or semi-luxury items which are being added to the list of 'needs'. Thus costs of travelling, entertainment and recreation all require money. Payments to the Church have now largely replaced the one-time gifts in kind, and taxes, paid by a few members of the farming community, can clearly only be met with cash.

451 511 [123] The first difficulty in investigating BUDGETS is the typical reticence to talk on matters financial. The second and more important draw-back is the aforementioned

6:Beeley K-S (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

and inertia of the traditional peasant.

STANDARD OF LIVING

178 511 [436] The past century and a half have seen the development from peasant to commercial farming, along with the adoption of money as the basis of exchange, and the appearance of a large range of new demands in diet, clothing, housing, luxuries, recreation, etc. Some observations on the living standards of the farming community during the period are now indicated.

175 511 369 178 Speaking of living standards in the Malta of the early nineteenth century Price considers that "an identity and cohesion prevailed not only in major economic trends but in the economic habits of the people" (B/556, p.8). Thus "In these circumstances it is possible to examine together the habits of rural labourers, urban labourers, artisans, small farmers and fishermen...." (B/556, p.9). Price holds that during the first half of the nineteenth century there was in fact little change in the living standards prevailing in the Maltese Islands despite the fluctuations evident within the national economy as a whole. "Years of prosperity may have brought a slight increase in the ratio of wheaten to barley bread or in the use of novel clothing such as straw hats. But, it seems clear, the chief effect of prosperity was to increase the consumption of oil, alcohol and tobacco; these, together with his religion, ranked first in the list of desirable and important things in the minds of the Maltese flush with surplus cash. Presumably these were the things he hoped society would give while his traditional diet, clothing and shelter were the things he expected society to provide" (B/556, p.9-10). 175 434 369 Among the unskilled urban and rural workers there was a notable uniformity in wage throughout the period. Price speaks of 6¾d for a day's work for a man (and about 1d only for a women) but observes that skilled workers, and especially those in dockyard employ, could expect very much more (B/556, p.9-10). For the mass of the labouring and farming community therefore income was of the order of a few pence per day but, as suggested, the prevailing self-sufficiency of the near-peasant farmer of the period made actual monetary income an inadequate indicator of standards of living. For the urban worker, on the other hand, lacking the farm basis, the low wage level meant poverty and hardship. More especially "Poverty..... pressed heavily on the under-employed" (B/556, p. 11).

175 288 The importance of cotton to the nineteenth century Maltese farmer has been discussed in Section 1. In 1839

In 1839 47?

175 288 the Royal Commissioners reported (B/184) that "The principa manufacture of the casals[28] is spinning with the spinning-wheel, or sometimes with the spindle. Second to this is the weaving of canvas, cotton and cloth used for clothing by the country people, and the necessary preparatory work, such as winding, beating the cotton, etc." But the industry was then much weaker than it had been two generations before and as it retreated during the nineteenth century no ready replacement was forthcoming from within agriculture itself. The farmer had to rely on other crops while, socially, the change affected the family as a working unit for cotton processing had been largely the work of women. Even in 1839 a considerable amount of blame for the prevailing low living standards could be attached to the decline of cotton. The Commissioners reported that the prevalent poverty had become worse since 1814 on account of the shortage of work and that unemployment was worst of all in the rural districts, the cotton areas, where the small wages not only precluded saving but also led to begging and stealing which was "One of the worst consequences of the prevalent poverty and at the same time a most active cause of it" (B/184).

175 178 288 [462]

175 178 288 735 511

Poverty, wages, sanitation and disease gave rise to much concern and investigation in the middle decades of the nineteenth century - especially in so far as the conditions of the labouring and rural classes were concerned. The Royal Commissioners' report in 1838-9 (B/184); Midge in 1840 (B/516); the Census two years later and those made in 1851 and at ten-year intervals thereafter (B/166,167); reports on sanitary conditions in 1867 and 1874 (B/223,226); on distress in 1824 and 1867-68 (B/205,207); on mortality in 1874-75 (B/225, et seq); and on cholera in 1865 (B/224), all threw light on the poor living standards of the Maltese. However the 1874-75 report on mortality did hasten to qualify its observations with "Poverty, indeed, at present, is not generally so great as it was in former times (about 40 years ago), when the bulk of the lower classes, especially in the country districts, lived constantly on barley bread of the worst description" while "It must also be admitted that the sanitary condition of these Islands, generally, is not so bad as that of other countries, and that, of late years, it has improved..." (B/225, p.7).

[262]

175 511 [369] [464] [452]

The basic conclusion to emerge from this evidence is that there existed a considerable gulf in general living standards between the people of the towns and those of the country. There was also an important contrast within the then rapidly expanding Valletta area,

175 458 511 [468] [184] between the unskilled labourer and the skilled. This dichotomy was a regular feature during the nineteenth century, as in the twentieth, and is to be distinguished from the rise and fall of prosperity and depression which characterised the totality of economic life in Malta. Malta was highly susceptible to events in the Mediterranean basin and in Europe as a whole and was much affected by changes in trading patterns and in strategy, so that the fortunes of the Maltese fluctuated with the alternation of prosperity and depression during the nineteenth century. [731] The sequence of wars, trade booms and slumps, droughts, epidemics and other events which affected the Mediterranean in general was particularly strongly felt in vulnerable Malta (B/556).

175 184 511 178 The major economic developments arising from the growth of the dockyard and the consolidation of the Islands' role have been outlined in Section 1. The various stages in this expansion were reflected in the economic life and the living standards of the Maltese just as the chain of external events made their presence felt. In all this the fortunes of one section of the population, such as the farming community, could at no time stand unaffected by fluctuations within the economy of the Islands as a whole.

175 178 [184] [871] Malta remained sharply divided within itself by class, district and education and the parallel differences of living standards between one section of society and another were continued. But the later decades of the nineteenth century saw, on the social as distinct from the economic plane, the beginnings of general education which, during the present century, was to remove the illiteracy which had for so long prevented the rural classes in Malta and Gozo from having any experience of life and society outside the limits of the village. [184] [369] Improvements in transport and communication within the Islands and the spread of amenities from the Urban area to the villages in the later nineteenth and in the twentieth centuries further tended to remove the veil of isolation which had shrouded the villages of Malta and Gozo and kept them cut off from the social and cultural [621] changes of the towns. Traditionally, each village had been a closely-knit unit under a Parish priest, having little contact with Valletta and perhaps less with the villages in other parts of the Islands (Section 1).

In the later decades of the nineteenth century the forces indicated were beginning to modify the position but it was not until the present century and particularly

178 [175] the years after 1939 that the cumulative effects of education, emancipation and communication were to produce a society very different from that which Maltese country [511] folk had known for centuries (Section 1). It became [184] different when the traditionally depressed sections of the community became restless and began to demand the improvements in their living standards which they came to believe should be theirs by right as well as need.

178 184 369 This is not to suggest that the present position of Maltese rural society is an 'end-product' of change. The opposite is true. The old and new exist side by side in agriculture and in the farming community of the Islands today. Some people, some places, and some features of life and work hold far more tenaciously to the old than do others where comparatively few years have seen considerable modifications of the traditional pattern.

175 458 464 511 By 1912, the Royal Commissioners were able to observe that the living standards of the labouring classes of Malta and Gozo compared well with those of other Mediterranean countries (B/186, p.25-6). "Building", they said, "is cheap and good and the country people are exceptionally well-housed". But, in their consideration of the economic state of the Islands as a whole, the Commissioners thought the picture much more gloomy. The depression which they found, though of only recent appearance, was being felt by the mass of the people, although "until the advent of the present depression, the condition of the people has been one of comparative comfort". To appreciate "The present distress, and the greatly extended unemployment of the working people of Malta.....it is necessary to recognise the entirely artificial nature of their former prosperity and employments, which depended to a large extent upon Imperial expenditure...." (B/186, p.12). Here did the Commissioners strike at the root of the problem which has grown to formidable proportions in the half-century since the report was made. They pointed to the position in which the economic structure of the country as a whole was based on the shifting sands of Imperial naval and military expenditure and in which the living standards of the Maltese population were therefore tied indirectly and directly to that Imperial expenditure. Moreover, within the Maltese population itself, it is not difficult to see that the first to be hit by a drop in Imperial expenditure (as happened between 1902 and 1911 and, again, in the post-1945 period) were and are the labouring and poorer classes generally lacking alternative employment in the Islands, in the event of their becoming redundant, and having often little or no capital reserves.

175 Here the agricultural labourer has been in a much stronger
458 position than the townsman for he has had the land to which
464 he could return when no other work was available. Thus the
469 degree of emphasis on the land within the past hundred years is seen to have varied inversely as the general level of prosperity in the Islands (Section 2).

178 The recent growth of part-time farming in Malta may be
241 related to an attempt by the countryman to benefit from the
464 higher wages and status attached to non-agricultural
458 pursuits and yet at the same time to maintain the foothold
554 on the land as if he were contemplating retreat thither in some future period of major economic recession and depression in the Islands. The difficulty here however is that Maltese farming as it is cannot support more than a minor part of the total population. As an economic retreat it therefore has severe limitations: but the
554 problem goes further. The present younger generation in the farming community, in its anxiety to free itself from the stigma and status of farming and village life, is cutting as many ties with the land as it can - and as quickly. Therefore the foothold in farming, even for the few who might rely on it in time of distress, is weakening. The estrangement threatens to become too complete to allow of reconciliation.

175 Something of the change in twentieth century Maltese
465 agriculture may be seen from that afore-mentioned index, the wage rate. Without attempting a full analysis which would necessitate a consideration of the changing wage structure within the total employed sector of the population, an indication of average wage-rates for sample years available illustrates the steady level in the nineteenth century followed by a gradual increase in the first decades of the present century, and, after the 1939-45 War, a rocketing in the generally accepted level of the agricultural wage. It may also be observed that the agricultural wage, while generally lower than the average labouring remuneration during the nineteenth century is, today, equal to or even more than the general labourer's wage - an indication of the prevailing supply and demand of agricultural labour.

Daily wage of male agricultural labourers:

1826-42	6½d - 8d	(B/556, p.215)
1843-54	8d - 10d	"
1855-56	1s - 1/6d	"
1857-65	1/3d - 2/6d	"
1866-85	10d - 3/6d	"
1907-08	1s - 2/4d	(B/165 - 1907-08)
1921	3s	(B/165 - 1921)
1936	3s - 3/6d	(B/165 - 1936)
1957-58	20s - 25s	(Personal Investigation)

178 464 511 In a consideration of the standard of living of the Maltese population in general and of the farming section of it in particular during the present century it is seen that the two World Wars (1914-18 and 1939-45) saw tremendous upheavals in this aspect of Maltese life, as in so many others. In the case of the 1914-18 struggle "there is no doubt that the War first and principally and secondly the political events that have occurred since have completely altered and raised the standard of living of the working classes in Malta...." (B/130 - 1930, p.ix). A distinction is here infered between the working classes and the upper and professional or business classes whose previously higher standards were maintained unimpaired or even improved. The wage-rate index after the 1914-18 War gives only an intermittent picture as official statistics on wage rates in agriculture have been very limited. The Blue Books of the inter-War period observed that "No official information is available" regarding agricultural wages (B/165) but the Cost-of-Living investigations between 1943 and 1946 are little better for they are concerned almost exclusively with non-agricultural workers (B/213, 214, 217).

178 464 465 511 It does emerge, however, that the 1914-18 War brought little change in Maltese living standards when compared with the effects of the 1939-45 War. In 1946 it was decided that "The war years have produced improvements in the standard of living and we may hope that the working class family will never revert to the pre-war standard" (B/217, para.5). Costs to the consumer of food, clothing and other items had doubled and trebled between 1939 and 1946 (B/217, Appendix I, II, IIA) but wages had also increased. In 1936 an average wage for labour in 'trade and manufacture' was put at an annual £82, or about 31/7d per week (B/165-1936, Section 23). Even by 1943 an average weekly wage for such workers had grown to £2.16s, plus an average 'other income' of a further 18/6d weekly. Against this was an average total weekly expenditure of £3.12.9d (B/213, Appendix R).

Farm work had shared in the increased wages. A 1936 estimate for agricultural labour put the weekly rate between 21/- and 24/- (B/165 - 1936, Section 23). The 1943 report quotes one farm labourer, among its sample 100 workers, as gaining a total of £2.16s per week, or the same as the average 'earned income' (without 'other income') of all the sample 100 workers (B/213, Appendix R, No.90).

000 During the War years the farmer had been able to

The over-all averages show that the farmers, of whom 9% were 'poor' by the C.A.R.E. definition, in 1958, are, as a class, slightly poorer than the 8.2% average for the whole population.

This pattern of comparatively low living standards in rural-agricultural Malta and Gozo is the essence of the problem with which this Section has been concerned. While farming and inferior standards of life remain synonomous in the Islands the younger generation of the rural community will not be content to remain on the land.

SECTION 4 : The Farmer's Outlook and Attitudes.

The importance of the past in understanding the present in Maltese agriculture has been emphasized. The change from peasant to commercial farming has been considered from its technical (Section 2) and its economic aspects (Section 3). The social background to this change is, however, no less important, particularly in so far as it relates to the work, thought and attitudes of a farmer who in fact is often little removed from the traditional when one penetrates a veneer of commercial profit-farming. Both among the literate and illiterate sections of the farming community this question of attitudes and outlook is of fundamental importance in any efforts towards improvements in Maltese agriculture.

The social environment of the Maltese countryman may be seen as three concentric circles, the family, village, and Malta. To the Gozitan who has never crossed the sea to Malta and to the old farmer who knows little of Valletta the concept of 'Malta' is something large and indeterminate. Even for the majority of the rural population, for whom Valletta and the towns are becoming a familiar part of experience, the Islands are large enough for them to feel none of the claustrophobia of which visitors to Malta complain. The 'National' unit is big enough for the farmer to speak of "Il-Gvern" - the Government of which he has heard frequently though imprecisely on all sides and on which he blames many of his economic and social problems. In this important concept of 'Gvern' no very clear distinction is made between the local Maltese authorities and the Imperial side of the Dyarchy[37]. Neither is allegiance to political parties very significant for personality is more important than party. Historically, this attitude to a remote 'Gvern' probably descends from the tradition of rule in the Islands which has included foreign British government since 1800 and the paternal but rigid hold of the Knights of St. John during their previous two and a half centuries in the Islands.

795 Another Malta-wide authority is the Church, but the summit of this is scarcely less remote to the farmer than is 'Il-Gvern' for in the normal practice of his religion he leans directly on the local church and priests.

829 To the farmer 'Gvern' is synonomous with control. Illiteracy has, in the past, made it very difficult for him to view authority with anything but suspicion. This has not been made easier by incompetent and condescending elements within officialdom whose actions, if any, have confirmed the doubts of the small farmer striving to provide his family with a living despite the odds against him - of which 'Gvern' was one.

178 Today the picture is changing. It is official policy 654 to "encourage investment and to improve farming methods so as to raise the efficiency of the industry to a level where it can provide a decent livelihood for those engaged in it"[38].

178 The farmers' reactions to efforts on his behalf are 156 particularly important at this crucial stage in the pro- 829 gress of agriculture in the Islands. Essentially his outlook retains much of the traditional reserve and caution of the illiterate peasant, an attitude apparent also in two further contexts, the organization within farming itself (Unions, Co-Operatives, etc.), and the farmers' attitudes towards society in general and rural society in particular.

829 The three aspects of the problem may be re-phrased as 156 (i) the farmer's attitudes to officialdom, espec- the Department of Agriculture, and 'Il-Gvern' generally,

(ii) his attitude towards other farmers and towards the industry as a whole,

(iii) his position as a member of a socially 'low' class within Malta.

[561] Within each of these the present gulf between the younger generation, with a degree of education and emancipation, and the older (including most of the Islands' full-time farmers) produces a further conflict of attitudes and aspirations.

654 THE FARMER AND GOVERNMENT

Official interest in agricultural development has increased very rapidly during the present decade and now includes a wide variety of measures aimed at improving farming by financial support and investment. These have been outlined in Section 2. There has also been an attempt to educate the farmer in better suited techniques and to make him aware of improvements which, it is believed, will increase the profit from his farm or herd. The problem here is seen to be twofold:

TABLE 3

Year	Purchased by M.M.U.		Surplus		Percentage cows' milk	
1943-44	510,000	gallons			27	
1948-49	776,000	"				
1950-51	1,298,000	"			35	(1951)
1952-53	1,795,000	"	99,000	gallons	44	(1951)
1954-55	2,390,000	"	275,000	"	48	(1955)
1956-57	3,542,000	"	391,000	"	57	(1956)

234 654 178 A consideration of Cases I to IX and XII (Section 6) shows how this official support for dairying in the Islands has made herdsmen in the Islands desperate to benefit from the guaranteed milk market. Many have greatly increased their herds and withdrawn from other aspects of their farming in order to concentrate on milk production. [434] Removal of Government support would have serious repercussions (Section 2) but, meanwhile, the herdsman is well satisfied with his steadily increasing income. The attitude of mind which permits a herdsman to develop a particular aspect of farming on this basis is significant. Clearly he has little awareness of the artificial basis of the position or, if he has, he is poor enough to take advantage of anything likely to bring a ready return whatever the long-term limitations may be.

Following the same pattern it would seem that if the farmer can be persuaded, for example, that he would increase the profit from his farm if he were to keep cost account records and modify his farm management accordingly he would be happy to do so. Similarly, as long as the balanced ration for pigs seemed to be doing his animals no harm he continued to feed it because it was subsidized and cheap. When, through mismanagement, the animals showed no signs of any improvement he returned speedily to the traditional feeding pattern. But this is a comparatively small question by comparison with the large-scale distortion of the dairying industry as a result of the guaranteed milk price - although the farmer does not think of the situation in these terms. There emerges, therefore, something of a moral obligation on the part of the Government to maintain the situation which a subsidy or virtual subsidy, as in the case of dairying, has produced.

185 829 439 Just as the farmer thinks only a short way ahead in time as far as the management of his farm is concerned so are his notions of space restricted. Earlier in this Section it was observed that he is aware of little beyond Malta. Thus it is difficult to make the farmer appreciate the intricacies of the export market for Maltese agricultural produce[42]. 439 The fact that Maltese produce for export

439 suffers by being inadequately graded and packed does not concern him although the specialist working in Malta on marketing problems has stressed this as a primary weakness up to now (B/253). The farmer is further reluctant to [178] change to the production of certain 'early' varieties of potato which would sell much more profitably on the overseas market than does the Arran Banner which has been the predominant variety in the Islands for several decades.

178 The argument returns, in fact, to the thesis put forward in a number of contexts in this report that the farmer 241 is still thinking very much as a peasant subsistence producer although to outward appearances he has now become a fully commercial, cash-cropping farmer. This outlook, the product of illiteracy and confined experience, will have to be appreciated by those concerned with any kind of improvement and development in the Maltese agriculture. It is the younger, literate generation of the farming community who would be capable of education in these terms - if they stay in agriculture to be educated.

654 In the long run it would appear that the most satis- 426 factory kind of financial help to farming is the loan at very low interest rate (Section 2). The basis of this was the Agriculture and Fishing Industries (Financial Assistance) Act, No.11 of 1956, which authorized the loans for approved capital improvement projects at only 1% interest per annum. A major result of the loan system was that it made the farmer independent of money-lenders and money-lending middlemen. Previously many farmers had suffered near financial strangulation in the grip of these indivuals, particularly where they were operating under perpetual debt (v. Cases V and IX). A second great advantage of the loan is that the farmer is able to improve his farm and farming and at the same time preserve that independence of operation so dear to him. Many of the subsidies on seeds, rations, etc. have forced him to use his money in a certain way. He much prefers if possible to have the money and spend it as he chooses on machinery, livestock and fodder, buildings, cisterns, irrigation equipment, land reclamation, and repayment of previous debts, etc.

654 One disturbing feature of the loans is, however, that 426 they are putting a lot of money into the hands of the farmer without necessarily ensuring that it is spent to 454 the best advantage of agriculture or to the farmer himself in a long term view. For example much of the money loaned has been put towards the purchase of livestock and accommodation for animals in order to increase milk production, while the present regime of guaranteed milk price remains. To this extent the loans have helped the

matter. [P 65]

While the farmer does not favour the co-operative movement at present he is generally dissatisfied also with the pitkal system and complains of the excessive profits being made by the pitkal, the sensal (a broker and transporter of produce) and the retailer. Very few do however venture to evade these middlemen completely by selling their produce directly to the consumer (B/387, p.17). This is probably the result in part of shortage of labour but in part also a reflection of the 'respect' in which the pitkal is held. The farmer is characteristically suspicious of any change in such a long-established part of his farming, even though he is loud with complaints of it.

The Government plan to centralize marketing on the one hand and to encourage the co-operative movement in the selling of produce on the other will not succeed without a great deal of patient education of the farmer supplemented by material incentives such as subsidies and other assistance already given in other aspects of agricultural development. The most successful co-operatives in Maltese farming to date are probably the two tractor co-operatives founded with the initiative and grant of free equipment by C.A.R.E. (Section 2). Here the farmer has seen a clear financial saving in plowing costs with no capital outlay on his part. He must similarly be persuaded that centralization and co-operatives in marketing would be to his advantage. Not only the farmers themselves but the consumers also would stand to benefit from a streamlining of marketing with grading and better packing and presentation of produce, while the improvements in Malta's position as an exporter of agricultural produce would fully justify the effort involved (B/253)[42].

YOUTH AND FARMING

In their pioneer investigation into the attitudes of the Maltese farmer Fr. Cirillo and his Royal University team stressed the crucial position of the younger generation in agriculture in the Islands (B/387). The present writer concurs with their views and considers the present retreat from farm and village as the most urgent problem in the industry. Something of the technical and economic background to this trend has been seen in Sections 2 and 3, but the social factors involved are no less important.

The fundamental contrast in outlook between the younger and older generations of the farming community today is that in the case of the older generation "with meagre opportunities in other occupations, and often

464 lacking any education at all they took up farming as their
184 natural calling" (B/387, p.9), but their sons are faced
178 with a choice both between occupations and ways of life. Their education is enabling them to compete with other sections of society for industrial and other non-agricultural employment while their emancipation, in terms of access to the world outside the village, is leading them to think of escape from the lowly social status of their fathers. They have been brought up to appreciate the insecurity of farming with its inadequate and fluctuating income and have seen the technical limitations and the hard and monotonous schedule of work with which their fathers have had to contend in order to provide even the most frugal living standards for their families. In very many cases the younger generation have been actively discouraged by their elders from contemplating farming as a livelihood. Within society as a whole they see farming as something of a low 'caste' and one example of this is the opposition faced by many a young farmer if he wishes to marry into a non-farming family.

The importance of this revolt on the part of the younger generation is clear when one considers the topic of this Section. The current policy is to change the pattern of farming in the Islands and to raise the standards of living of the farmers by the variety of methods mentioned and these are, quite naturally, being aimed primarily at the present farmers, that is to say the older generation. But the future of farming depends on the future farmers who are, it would appear, leaving or have already left the industry. Many of them do not plan to stay in farming longer than the time necessary to find another occupation and they are consequently not concerned with loans, subsidies, lectures, and the work of the advisory service. The farming which they are anxious to leave will, it is hoped, change rapidly in response to the measure outlined. But, even if only a few years are needed to show substantial results and a better kind of farming is evolved, the younger generations may not be there to take over. Many of them will have emigrated from the Islands altogether and others will have left the villages for all manner of employment in the towns.

654 The official aid to farming policy may fail, one
829 fears, on two accounts:

(i) The measures designed to assist the farmer and farming have not yet been as successful as was hoped because of the difficulties of having rapid and far-reaching changes accepted by a suspicious, conservative and largely illiterate body of farmers,

654 829 464 178 (ii) The younger generation are not interested in improving farming; they scarcely stop to think that any changes in the industry might be possible in their present anxiety to find a new job in a different walk of life. Thus they will probably not be available to take over Maltese agriculture, improved or otherwise, from their fathers.

SECTION 5 : Conclusions.

369 In conclusion one may attempt to draw together the several general points raised in the previous four Sections. The most important of these may be listed as follows:

(1) The twentieth century is witnessing an accelerating process of the 'urbanization' of rural Malta and Gozo (Section 1). This comprises

(a) material change (the development of electricity, roads, sewage, transport, and a variety of other amenities),

(b) cultural change following general, elementary education - that is literacy, 'emancipation' and the emergence of a critical public awareness,

[565] [793] (c) social and economic changes which have laid the foundations of a rural middle class, unknown in the traditional village scene. Along with this have come modifications in the pivotal rôle of the Parish Priest and other priests. Some of their traditional functions, notably teaching and caring for the sick, have been taken over by specialists in such fields.

369 829 The factors outlined under (a), (b), and (c) are tending to extend the horizon of the individual villager far beyond the limits of his own village. Whereas he used to work and think within his family and village he is now aware of Malta and beyond.

241 464 178 (2) The particular physical limitations on farming in the Islands have, in the past, made the industry dependent to a very considerable extent on the meticulous hand-labour of the industrious Maltese farmer. This has been necessary not only in cultivation itself but also in the maintenance, and even construction, of the fields and terraces themselves (Section 2). The present younger generation of the farming community is showing itself unwilling to accept the life and work which conditions such as these involved. They have benefited from general elementary education, literacy, and contact with the world outside the villages to the extent of demanding work which seems to them economically and socially rewarding. The past twenty-five years have seen a rapid decline in the number of full-time farmers and farm-workers. Today the farmer, in most cases no longer assisted by his sons, finds hired labour both scarce and costly (Section 2).

178 241 407 464 (3) On account of those same physical limitations mechanization of field-work cannot be expected to solve all labour problems in Maltese agriculture. An initial, over-optimistic emphasis on large tractors and other heavy machinery has given way to a rapid increase in the number and popularity of the small rotary-cultivators. But even this cannot be expected to displace completely the wooden plow and hand implement working (Section 2).

However, mechanized farm implements, particularly the small, manoeuvrable rotary-cultivator type of hand tractor, have enabled a reduced number of farmers to work their fields more intensively, and, in some cases, to increase the area worked by a single individual.

The neglect of those aspects of farming where manual work is dominant and necessary have, nevertheless, accompanied this change with the bizarre result that intensification of effort and neglect are proceeding simultaneously (B/336).

178 434 (4) A basic factor in the present situation, in which the young farmer is retreating from farming, has been the emergence of a demand for money income (Section 3). The traditional pattern of peasant, subsistence farming in which the main object was the support of the farmer and his family has been replaced by a money-conscious outlook in farming. The farmer now expects his farm to produce a profit with which he can

(a) purchase those items no longer produced on his farm or by his family (clothing, bread etc., etc.),

(b) purchase items which have recently become part of his regular demands and for which money is a sine qua non (property, farm machinery and equipment, clothing, preserved and other imported foods and drinks, recreation, transport, etc.),

433 511 Food, as an item of family expenditure, nowadays figures especially prominantly

(a) where the income derives mainly from milk sold to the M.M.U. and where the land is put, almost exclusively, to fodder,

(b) among part-time farmers (a very rapidly growing element of the farming community in recent years) who concentrate on fodder crops because of the comparatively little labour involved and the generally good market prospects.

178 434 But of greater significance in the long-term view is the fact that these new demands for monetary gain are a particularly prominent feature among the present younger generation of the farming community. For them a substantially increased income is synonomous with social and economic betterment. Since they do not envisage such an increased income coming from farming they are all the more anxious to leave the

industry in search of it.

(5) The Maltese farmer (and, incidentally, also the fishermen) has today a standard of living below the average for the whole country (Section 3). In large part this is related to

(a) the economic and technical difficulties facing his agriculture (Section 2),

(b) his inability, in many cases, to make the change from peasant, subsistence to the money-based, commercial farming of today (v.4).

In fact a considerable section of the full-time farming community is now operating either with very little or no profit or is striving to work in a perpetual, though fluctuating, debt (Section 3).

Yet this comparatively low living standard vis-à-vis the non-farming section of the population is in fact lower than it appears statistically (Section 3) because

(a) the farmer does not enjoy the limited working day (e.g. eight hours) demanded in most other occupations, and also demanded, significantly, by the full-time farm-labourer without fields of his own (Section 2),

(b) the farmer has even today a more modest level of demands (housing, clothing, food, recreation, etc.) than have the bulk of the rest of the population despite the growth in such demands, discussed in Section 3,

(c) many farmers have been living at a rather higher standard, than that to which they were accustomed, since 1945 on the savings they have retained from their profits accumulated during the siege conditions early in the war. These reserves are now, however, dwindling and disappearing.

(6) The farmer is still, in many cases, thinking as a 'peasant' subsistence producer although he is at the same time attempting to operate in a now commercially-orientated agriculture. This emerges in his attitudes to 'officialdom' in the shape of the Department of Agriculture, to co-operatives, to Farmers' Unions, to the agents and middlemen concerned with marketing of produce and the supply of seeds, etc. and to his fellow farmers. He is still very much an individualist in outlook and sceptical of any novel feature not tried and trusted in his experience. He is cautious where outsiders are concerned - notably Government officials, and he is doubtful of the validity, for Malta and Maltese conditions, of the advice of non-Maltese experts on agriculture and related topics. He will, for example, even look for a possible element of treachery in such as the Government's recent plant to improve the packing and grading of produce for export.

On the other hand, however, the farmer is characteristically loud in his assertions that "Government should adopt

829 157 a policy of long term assurances for agriculture" (B/387, p.39). He claims that the Government "ought" to guarantee his prices, his markets, and "ought" to find the foreign export markets, and provide machinery, subsidies, etc. He also insists, incongruously, that farmers' needs could well be served by a strong and well-organized Union of Farmers and yet, in the next breath, he will reject outright any suggestions that he, individually, might take a prominent part in such a movement. The nature of this attitude emerges clearly from the collection of complaints and comments, made by farmers to Fr. Cirillo and his Royal University team (B/387). On the one hand, the farmer demands Government support for farming but, on the other hand, he speaks even of his fellow farmers as "they". Conservative, cautious and usually illiterate, he is quick to speak but slow to act (v.Section 4).

829 The new awareness of horizons outside the village is consequently limited in extent and confined in nature. The farmer's son, however, with his education and emancipation and his ideas of social and economic emulation, has a clearer vision of the illogicality of his father's situation but is not yet sufficiently mentally liberated from the past to see for himself any right course of action.

554 369 [177] (7) As a class, the farmer is low on the social scale. This arises partly from his illiteracy and the features outlined in (6) and is partly also the outcome of a tradition of wealth and education being confined to the cities and towns. Wealth and culture came easily to the urban section of Maltese society and both implied foreign contacts on a large scale. Meanwhile the Maltese farmer toiling in his fields remained cut off socially as well as economically.

Today this felt inferiority puts him

● 178 554 (a) in a weak position for bargaining with Government and 'officials' and business men fully prepared to take advantage of their rather better education,

(b) - if young and literate, in the position of being anxious to escape from his lowly class by leaving the village and farming as opportunity presents itself (v.Section 4).

654 178 [135] (8) Official policy has been to assist farming in the Islands by means of a variety of subsidies and guarantees designed to protect the farmer from unfavourable competition and fluctuations in market demand (Sections 2 and 4). The industry has, in the past, received such attention only in time of siege of widespread unemployment. The basic intention today is therefore

(a) to enable Malta's only basic industry - agriculture - to develop under protection for it is held that "In an Island where mineral resources are non-existent agriculture must play a predominant part in the national economy" (B/239, p.2).

6:Beeley K-5 (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

654 (b) to encourage the members of the farming community to remain in their villages and in the industry.

654 234 (9) Following the official policy, outlined under (8) particularly that relating to dairying in the Islands, and the limited and short-sighted outlook of the average Maltese farmer (v.6), an irrational emphasis on milk production has emerged in recent years (v. Section 4). The dairy industry has grown to unprecedented size in the Islands and many herdsmen have seized eagerly upon the guaranteed price for milk sold to the M.M.U. as a source of a steady income. The fact that the dairy industry as a whole is over-producing and the continuation of the present conditions depend on a virtual Government subsidy does not deter them from concentrating all efforts into milk production to the neglect of other aspects of farming.

654 178 (10) The official policy, outlined in (8) and (9), seems likely to fail or to come near to failure on two main accounts (Section 4):

(a) the difficulties facing current attempts to pursuade the farmer to accept new schemes, crops, equipment, methods, etc., and arising from

(i) the outlook and attitudes of the farmer as discussed in (6),

[208] (ii) the use of unsuitable means of propaganda by the Advisory Service and others at present attempting to pursuade the farmer to accept new ideas and methods which would bring him cheaper working, a better profit and, thereby, contentment.

(b) the fact that the policy, outlined in (8), is directed, naturally enough, at the present farmers. This generation, however, illiterate and conservative, and with an average age in the late fifties, is, in the long-term view, the wrong one.

The present younger generation in the farming community, whose literacy and awareness of the world beyond the village make them educable and more responsive to new ideas, are the individuals towards whom official effort should be directed if Maltese agriculture is not to be lost by default. Nothing, however, included in official policy (up to December, 1959) is aimed at them (there is nothing resembling a young farmers' club in the Islands and no institute or college where agriculture can be studied).

241 178 The younger generation is in fact, on account of the whole complex of technical, economic and social reason (the strenuous work, the insecurity and the low social status involved) discussed in the four previous Sections, anxious to escape from farming as fast as opportunity to do so emerges.

The problem is clear, and its solution one of action.

*159 156 234 232 useless in my district" but Pawlu, who has at all times in his life been conscious of education and a knowledge of things outside his village, is prepared to consider suggestions on their merits. This attitude pervades the working of his farm as a unit and has had important repercussions within his family. (v. Section 4).

*159 156 829 In spite of his own lack of advanced formal education, Pawlu has in fact an awareness of its importance which is still uncommon in rural Gozo. He is constantly stressing the need for education in its widest sense, both general and technical. He is anxious for his children to be educated to a standard far above his own, while, in the wider scene, he recognizes the importance of education for the farmer and farming. His attitude to the course of lectures for farmers (Section 4) is typical of the man. He observed that "attendances at the lectures have been big because the farmers are interested - they wouldn't go if they were not". The ideas put forward by the experts are weighed by the farmer and, if considered 'good ideas', are discussed at length in the villages or at the It-Tokk market on Sunday mornings. These lecture courses for farmers, and others like them such as the important McClemont demonstrations and lectures on dairying technique (Section 4), fail for Pawlu in so far as they do not lead to individual contact between specialist and farmer. No farmer would dream of making comment or criticising 'officialdom' - with which he naturally associates ventures like those of Haesler and McClemont[50]. "The Maltese back down much more easily than do the English in their relations with the authorities. In England you might complain to a Government Department and there would be argument for a day but in Malta such a complaint would mean petty victimization for years". The farmer blames "clerical inefficiency" in Valletta for what he considers has been the failure to follow up the McClemont or other recommendations but no farmer would seriously consider complaining in person to officialdom. They just argue and become increasingly bitter with their lot.

* 159 178 829 [554] [464] Farming for Pawlu means independence. He complains of the inferior social position which the farmer holds in Maltese society today and observes that the present generation of young people demand the means to enable them to equal the people of the towns in appearance, leisure and other superficialities. The old farmer with little formal education is not troubled by these notions. His life is the only one he can comprehend - apart from which his daily round leaves him little time to think. The youngster, on the other hand, is desperate for an eight-hour job with steady income and leisure time in place of unpaid field work with his parents.

leisure time in place of unpaid field work with his parents.

Pawlu admits nevertheless that much of the inferior condition of the farmer derives from his inability to unite with other farmers (Section 4). Illiteracy, ignorance and suspicion are the major causes of his fear. Only a few farmers are members of either of the two opposing Unions of Farmers while the situation regarding co-operatives is equally unpromising. Pawlu himself became one of the organizers of a special 'Tractor Co-Operative', initiated by C.A.R.E. at the end of 1958 (Section 2) for a group of farmers in his home village. The members paid £2 each on joining the co-operative and were thereafter able to hire one of the two tractors donated by C.A.R.E. at only 10/- per hour instead of the commercial 17s. The fact that Pawlu himself was among the organizers of such a novel venture reflects his progressive outlook, and his standing in the village.

*159 156 829 Politics interest Pawlu, to a more than average degree His concern is based on an informed intelligence. A supporter of the Labour Party, he considers the Nationalists as holding the masses in contempt and he points to their emphasis on the Italian language and the non-Maltese culture which it represented as evidence. He reads the local Maltese-language press but is sufficiently independent of mind to have cancelled his subscription to the 'Lehen is-Sewwa' (B/65) at the time of the 'Integration' referendum on the grounds that neither the Church nor the Paper would publish an 'official' statement on the attitude of the Church. Yet his religious devotion is without question and he has a respected place in Church and village life.

*159 156 829 593 [555] [167] The Family. Pawlu lives with his wife and six of his children. His eldest son and daughter are both working as teachers in Malta. Another daughter has emigrated.

Pawlu's wife speaks only Maltese and had as little formal education as her husband, but she has at all times nothing but encouragement for her family in their education In this case there is not the usual gulf in outlook between parents and children on account of the education of the latter - for the parents fully realize the need. Pawlu's [462] wife used to work in the fields when young but now spends her time in the house. Certain jobs remain her special concern however, notably cheese-making, care of lambs and chicks and egg-collection.

*159 156 108 593 [895] The eldest son, now working as a teacher, is one of the young 'intellectuals' who are currently making an appearance in Gozo. The ties of family and respect between him and his father are strong but he is out of touch with the

*159 156 ●178 593 farm and ignorant of many details of its history and operation. He is "never likely to soil his hands with farming". He is moving away from farming and from the cultural and social life of his village. He apologises for the efforts of the villagers when they attempt to produce a play, he dismisses nick-names as "old-fashioned", and he decries the limitations on activity in his native Island (no dancing or bright lights). Yet he is still enough attached to Gozo to want to introduce changes to it and to make it more like the place his education has made him want to live in. He is typical of one important and growing element in the younger generation of rural Malta and Gozo. In his teens he used to help his father in the fields and took milk to the collection depot, but this stopped as soon as he found a full-time alternative occupation.

*159 156 593 46 Pawlu's eldest daughter, also a teacher, has left farm-work far behind. For her this was never more than casual assistance with vegetable picking and lifting during holidays from school. It is not likely that she will be a farmer's wife.

87 Pawlu's second daughter left school at twelve and divided her time between house and field work until her marriage in her late teens. She was acknowledged as her father's main assistant with the animals.

Two daughters in their middle teens are academically inclined to the extent of staying at school as long as possible and speaking four languages. Both still do incidental farm work when not occupied with studies. Both would be probable 'sixth-form' and university candidates were there any liklihood of financial backing. Their education, especially in English language and culture, is giving them - and many others like them - an advancement which is not matched by opportunity. They are learning in an educational cul-de-sac.

A son in his middle teens works full-time in the fields with his father, having left school at twelve, while two more boys are still of compulsory school age and give their father only casual assistance with feeding the smaller animals out of school hours. A little girl of some ten years makes no economic contribution to the farm.

*159 46 The major feature to emerge from the above consideration is that the bulk of the work of the farm, and the full-time responsibility for all jobs, rests with Pawlu alone. The son who is old enough to deputise for his father has left farming: the only full-time help comes from a younger boy who may himself decide to follow his brother in a few years. Now Pawlu complains that "Labour is the main trouble if the farmer cannot cope with all the

*159 cafes, clubs, etc., it remains the centre of village affairs
512 and the focus of activity, secular as well as religious.
794 Pawlu is one of the farmers of this village, but his
592 children are not likely to be farmers. Therefore can they
●178 remain of the village? As yet it has patently little to
*159 offer their education and culture and no apparent opportunity for a livelihood at their new and higher standards. They are leaving farming and are leaving the village as well in search of the means of earning a living - other than in farming.

SUMMARY of CASE I

*159 (A large scale Gozitan goats' milk producer with a considerable land holding)
423
427 A. Land.
[311] - Area held in 1956: 18¾ tmien, 1957: 30½ tmien, 1958: 42½ tmien, the additions being almost entirely in the form of grazing land. The present holding is in 26 plots, rented from several landlords including Church, Civil Government and private individuals. Owns one small plot and sublets several others from neighbouring farmers. Plots scattered over considerable area in Gharb and St. Lawrenz districts. Rent totals £23.14.0 p.a., ranging from 21/6 per tomna for cultivable (dry) land to 4/- per tomna for rough grazing.

- Previously held a further 20 tmien, 3 of which have been sub-let or exchanged and 17 abandoned owing to inaccessibility.

*159 B. Utilisation.
423
311

	1956	1957	1958
House	¼	¼	¼
Vines	¼	¼	¼
Prickly pear	¼	¼	¼
Fodders	8½	10½	14½
Vegetables	8¾	6½	2¾
Rough Grazing	-	12	24
Unused	¼	¼	¼
Total	18¾	30½	42½ tmien

*159 C. Livestock. (Nov. 1957)
231
38 goats, 8 kids
2 cows
1 sheep
100 poultry
1 horse

*159 D. Capital.
411 - Land all rented save one small plot.
[429] - Appears to be amassing capital from profits on milk
[456] production.
- No specialised equipment.

*159 E. Labour.
464 - No permanent hired help.
- One son works full time on the farm, help from other children.

*159 F. Production and Sales.
433 - Milk is the main item of income to which occasional
[434] small sales of vegetables are the only addition.
- Sample daily feed for 1 cow yielding c.3 gallons

*159 234 premises were deemed by the sanitary authorities to be unfit for animals. He has no goat pens near his house but is prevented by the lack of capital from making substantial improvements in his facilities. Owing to shortage of space, he prefers to buy in fully-grown animals rather than to breed his own, which would be cheaper. Fodder storage [246] (he produces just enough sulla to feed his own goats) is a further problem and he tries to 'make do' with odd corners of often unsuitable space.

*159 241 433 Crop production is geared to the provision of fodder for the goats, together with the supply of vegetables for the family, and grapes (for wine), some tomatoes and other items for casual sale to local shops.

*159 434 The income side of his budget depends on the proceeds from the milk sold to the M.M.U. In August, 1957, he was getting about 16/9d a dry for the milk sold. His grapes for 1957 brought him a further £66. His largest expense is fodder (apart from sulla) and its price is a constant [427] cause of grumbling and bitterness by Guźepp. Rents for 1957 totalled £35, that is about £1 per tomna for good land (generally red soiled 'hamrija') and 15/- for poorer, whiter ('abjad') soils. His cropping illustrates a common [241] practice in Maltese farming in that he tends to plant more [433] of a crop which has just had a 'good' season and thereby frequently suffers from glut conditions. Thus in 1958 he aimed to plant a large area to marrow (gargha baghli) because "last year's crop was good". In the previous year he had been unable to get all the potato seed he would have liked but, at the end of the season, was able to buy in potatoes very cheaply for the table because of the general glut in the crop which he had, as it transpired, fortunately avoided.

*159 438 443 Guźepp, like most farmers, is very critical of the great gulf between the price given by the pitkal and that paid by the consumer. In a small way he strives to avoid this by selling some of his produce directly in the local village, but this brings him only some £12 per annum.

X 159 511 829 178 Expenses are few apart from food, clothing and a few extra items such as Church contributions. His bill for entertainment is practically nil and his children are not yet old enough to demand large sums of pocket money - which one foresees they will do. Guźepp is very anxious to enlarge his farm and his herd and to improve his accommodation. In this development one feels he is looking to the future support of his now school-age sons. Certainly the older of these seem at present to look forward to following in their father's footsteps. But it is clear also that Guźepp's own deep attachment to the land and to farming is

*159 185 241 ●178 the source of the enthusiasm among his children and when a few more years have made them money-conscious it is difficult to visualize their reconciling the limitations and lack of profit in farming with their aspirations towards the bright lights of Valletta and other diversions. For the present nevertheless Ġużepp wants to expand his land holding and herd, although he has no sort of a bank balance and thinks in terms of the present low-interest loans being made available by the Government for farm development and of "working harder, rising earlier and economising on fruit and desserts for the children".

*159 362 [427] His house is old and remote from the village. He pays the landlord, "who does not do the repairs he ought", £8.10s per annum and thinks £5 would be much fairer. Given a perpetual lease on a plot he would build himself a new house and include near it accommodation for his animals. For his large family of wife and eight children the house, though very well kept, is hopelessly inadequate. Certainly [157] the placid and generous natures of both Ġużepp and his wife enable the family to carry on under limitations of both home and farm which would have persuaded many another farmer to emigrate long ago.

*159 54 461 Moreover there is nothing in the hamlet which might be called social relaxation. The nearest Band Clubs, cinemas and cafés are in the village more than a mile away - a long distance by Maltese standards. However, as Ġużepp's wife observes "these things are not missed by the people" who have had little experience of them. She notes that in Malta, unlike England, the countryman can easily get to the bright lights, if he wishes, by bus. "But work, family and Church take up a lot of time".

*159 464 654 [426] Labour problems do not trouble Ġużepp. He can himself operate his small holding and care for his two dozen animals with the help of his wife, who joins him in the fields when work is pressing, and his young sons, whose contribution, he admits, is very considerable out of school hours and in the vacations. He is keen to mechanize (i.e. to acquire a hand cultivator on a Government low-interest loan) because he sees this as the way to increase the area worked with his present labour force. A larger area would mean more fodder produced which would bring more profit on the milk sold, while the number of animals could itself be increased along with the provision of extra accommodation (also on Government loan). The basic assumption here is that the Government's guaranteed price to the herdsmen for *159 443 milk produced will continue. If it does not he would, it appears, be forced to rely more on field produce for sale through the pitkal marketing system. He knows that profits here would be less and disturbingly prone to competitive

available", and normally delegates most of the work to a labourer who receives 24/- for an occasional day's work.

His own fields produce only a small part of the fodder required by the herd however and Wistin buys in sulla and other fodder "as it is needed". He does not buy regularly nor does he keep any record of his purchases or sales. In December, 1957, he was spending about 15/- per day on fodder other than sulla, on which he had spent £120 during the previous year, 1956. But of costs of production of milk he has little idea. His own labour does not figure as a 'cost'.

Wistin's family of eleven spends about £1 on food per day and eats potatoes and other vegetables and milk from the home farm to the value of a further 7/6d daily. The new demands on money are observed by both Wistin and his wife. She says that in her youth she "would never have dreamt of spending on clothes the money which her daughterr are now spending". "In the old days, a girl went to the sea with her parents or on an occasional visit to Sant Anton - now they go to the cinema or to Valletta to buy shoes for the festa". One of the daughters is shortly to be married to a policeman and Wistin observes that the costr of the wedding and the dowry will be very considerable.

Wistin is a true herdsman. He has no interests which would upset his heavy routine of work. He is "not interested in festas" and his only relaxation is an occasional visit to the races at Marsa when his children are on holiday from school and able to take the goats out to graze.

His father was a labourer with the Services and had only a few fields, but Wistin began working for other herdsmen and then gradually built up his own herd to its present size, particularly in the past few years when, in common with many other Maltese and Gozitan herdsmen, he has ridden on the crest of the guaranteed-price wave. None of his children, however, shows any interest in goats and it is clear that both Wistin's wife and his brother-in-law (who has a half-share in the house occupied by Wistin and his family) are actively discouraging the children from planning to follow their father. Their main objection to herding appears to be the long hours and hard work entailed. Wistin is more than a little sad that the herd and farm which he has built up is likely to be broken up for lack of interest among his sons, for, as he says, "Once you leave the fields you never go back...."

CASE IV : Summary.

(A large-scale goats milk producer with some land.)

A. Land.

6 tmien in the Naxxar-Gharghur Hills region.

159 452 off until mid-November but, in the intervening two and a half months, the purchase of fodder had been continued and the debt maintained. In that September he himself put his debt at £60 and said that at the previous Christmas (1956) it had been £100. Thus a debt of £60 in the flush milk season of highest total receipts from the M.M.U. would appear to be the best financial position he could achieve. Removal of the guaranteed milk price to the producer could result only in ruin for this herdsman and the many in the Islands like him.

159 829 In spite of his own poverty Anglu maintains that he is fully aware of the artificial economic picture of which the guaranteed price is a part. In the same breath however he complains that he could sell his milk for more than the M.M.U. gives him in the short season. Here he overlooks the obvious outcome of a removal of the guarantee during the annual glut.

159 178 291 511 His financial hardships make it impossible for him to hire labour or to invest in any capital improvements to the farm or herd. Neither does it enable him to support his family as he aspires. This is especially evident in the case of clothing because the family lives in an urban area and therefore strives to appear as well dressed as their non-farming neighbours. Anglu observes that there has been a change both in the types of clothing worn and in the occasions on which they are worn. He speaks of a Doctor of the district who used to go barefoot in the streets carrying a pair of shoes to put on before entering a house or Church. Nowadays, by contrast, children attend school with shoes and are generally well turned out. This is particularly true of an urban area, where Anglu's children go to school and where his teenage children go to work - a son as an apprentice carpenter, one daughter as a shop assistant and another as a factory worker. None of his children is likely to contemplate farming as a way of life and means of earning a living, for, in their father's case they can see an extreme example of the problem facing many farmers throughout the Islands today, that is a man unable to make a living wage for himself and his family from a farm limited in possibilities by external factors and dependant on a guarantee which could be removed at a general election.

159 429 **CASE V : Summary.**

(A landless, urban, small-scale goats' milk producer)

A. Land.

Rents and grazes 1 tomna of wasteland.
Rents and works as a domestic garden 1 tomna of dry land, in the Urban area.

159 423 551 The family has occupied the present house for several generations and has acquired the street name as a family nick-name (these nick-names remain the standard, even semi-official, mode of reference though not of address, when the Christian name is used, v.R/376). Gnetu is a [554] [624] prominent member of the community in his part of the village which now includes some non-agricultural workers.

159 879 867 461 234 His outlook is rather more 'urban' than that of more isolated farmers, such as Case II. His adult son is an active supporter of the local football club and a regular cinema-goer. Gnetu himself is not concerned with such relaxation. He is devoted to his animals and especially to the goats which he will keep "because we have always had them". He takes an interest in farming and, despite 159 829 544 234 178 his illiteracy, is fully prepared to listen to advice. He enters animals in shows at Ghammieri and attended public lectures organized for farmers in 1957 (Section 4). He thought the lectures and a film on dairying technique interesting but gave the usual verdict that Maltese farming suffers from special difficulties of its own which cannot be solved by what he believes are "foreign methods". He observes that "it would be an excellent idea to go to the trouble of washing once animals regularly but the time and labour thus expended would bring no additional return to the farmer". He believes that the methods which he employs throughout the working of his farm are tried and therefore to be trusted although in more than a few cases some basic cost accounting (as suggested at the lectures) would reveal the patent weaknesses in his argument.

CASE VI : Summary.

159 423 (A goats' and cows' milk producer with a considerable land holding.)

A. Land.

23 tmien of land, mainly dry, comprising 11 plots in 7 parcels arranged in two main blocks, one in the Ghajn Qajjet (Rabat-Dingli Uplands) one in the Blue Clay Basin on slopes of Wied Qlejgha. The former on soils of the l-Iklin Complex, the latter on good, sheltered Carbonate Raw Soils.

[429] All rented from a number of landlords, including the Civil government. Rent estimated at c.£30 p.a.

159 241 B. Utilisation.

The emphasis is on fodder crops.

Crop plan, Feb. 1957.

Plot 1	Potatoes	Plot 7	Sulla
Plot 2	Sulla	Plot 8	Tomatoes, potatoes.
Plot 3	Barley	Plot 9	Tomatoes
Plot 4	Barley	Plot 10	Vines
Plot 5	Vetches	Plot 11	Sulla
Plot 6	Poor grass for bedding and grazing.	Plus wallside fruits and vines in several plots.	

4:Beeley K-S (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

CASE VII : Wensu (A goats' and cows' milk producer with a small land holding.).

Like Case VI, Wensu has been a goat herder and is now anxious to concentrate on dairy cows. At present he holds 4 Friesians, belonging to himself and his sons, but he wants to import Ayrshires. This cow, says Wensu, is better suited to Maltese conditions, needing less feed than the Friesian and standing up better to long periods of confinement in cramped stalls. Wensu became interested in cows when the Government forbade the selling of raw goats' milk in Valletta. For a time thereafter he sold bottled milk in the capital and then returned to selling raw goats' milk in still unclosed areas such as nearby Cospicua until that too came to an end with the evacuation in 1940. After the War he went back to cows' milk production and sold his output to the M.M.U. He acquired the Friesians through an exchange for inferior quality and diseased goats organized by the Government (one cow for 13 goats). At present, he says, cows' milk production is the more profitable ("Six cows will support a small family") but that this would not be so were it possible to give goats good grazing land at low cost. He reckons that good grazing saves 15/- per day on the fodder bill.

Wensu's Case illustrates an important feature of the study of a predominantly illiterate section of society. This is the prominence of personality in the thoughts and actions of the individual. Unable to read and suspicious of what he may hear over Rediffusion, Wensu relies on personal contact to a very considerable degree. This is clear from a brief survey of his life. He speaks nowadays of a certain Dr. MacFarlane whose veterinary skill and advice impressed him and who originally recommended him to keep Ayrshires. To listen to Wensu talking of this "Scots Doctor" one gathers that Wensu last spoke with him quite recently. In fact, however, Dr. A.M. MacFarlane was Superintendent Veterinary Surgeon in Malta some half a century ago! A Mr. Hurst gave him advice on bulls some 25 years ago while, much more recently, Mr. Ebejer Blythe of the Department of Agriculture gave him much valued information on lucerne as a fodder and, latest of all, Dr. Godfrey Alton, the veterinary expert, has become something of a help for the injections he has arranged. Evidently, therefore, any improvements in Maltese farming have a greater chance of success if this element of personal contact - particularly in the cases of illiterate farmers - can be established. One man who will argue with one farmer for a morning on a single topic stands a greater chance of general success than has the big public lecture or even the practical demonstration.

159 For once a single man can be convinced of the success of a
829 novel method or crop he will soon be copied by his follows.
178 Wenzu himself observes that when he had heard about the
246 lucerne for the first time and had planted some with great success in his own fields neighbouring farmers were not slow to copy him (v. Section 4).

CASE VII : Summary.

159 (A goats' and cows' milk producer with a small land holding.)

423 A. Land.
427
- Has 3 timon, worked by another farmer who shares income (£21) with him.
- Holds on lease a further area which had been let out for building and brings him £32 p.a. - much more than could be obtained for its crops.
- Also rents grazing in summer months.

159 B. Utilisation.
24
- The 3 timon field is under sulla, barley and a few vegetables.

C. Livestock.

159
- Is changing over from goats to cattle.
- Goats: 1954: 60; 1957: 44; 1958: 38.
23
234
- Cattle: 4 Friesians. Aims to build up the herd by private import of Ayrshires of which he has a high opinion. 3 of the cattle are owned by his sons though he tends them.

159 D. Capital.
454
- No information, but appears to have some reserves.

E. Labour.

464
- Some assistance from a son who is in govt. employment.
- Hires no labour.
- Thus does great bulk of the work himself.

F. Production and Sales.

434
234
- Milk (Oct. 1957) 10 gallons goats' milk, 9 gallons cows' milk daily to M.M.U. Gives sons a share in income though they appear to make no payment to their father for fodder, stall accommodation etc.
- Calves and kids usually sold after weaning.

G. Husbandry.

159
23
(1) Grazing.
- Where possible, goats grazed out and this is said to save him 15/- a day and to reduce sulla consumption to 4 bundles daily.

429
311
- Rents 7 timon of govt. land from part-timers at £1 per month from Jun. to Aug.
- This land is good, cultivable land untended because of part-timers' inability to work it.

(2) Fodder.
- Cake, barley, potatoes, beans, sulla.
- Feeds all that the animals will take.
- Buys in bulk when prices low.
- In six months (Oct. 1957-Mar. 1958) used nearly 2 tons of cake and 15 tons of beans.

435
434
- Sulla is bought at 9/- to 16/- per hamel according to quality and uses some 200 hmiel per annum.
- Fodder costs leave very small profit margin from milk.

H. General.

159
156
- Attempting to profit from sales to M.M.U. with no knowledge of the economics involved.
- Extremely suspicious of agents, government etc.

* N. General.

159 (i) In some of its characteristics this type of syndi-
472 cate is not typical of Maltese farming systems. e
451 The partnership seems to derive historically from a line of large farmers and is now held together by the drive and ability of one of their number.

*159 (ii) Nevertheless if one ignores the partnership organ-
472 isation one may use this case-study as illustrating
451 the practises and modes of thought of the most
181 highly developed type of Maltese farmer.

- Characteristically there is a marked reluctance to give any financial information. Official records and returns are even less accurate than in the case of smaller-scale and more ignorant cultivators. Some records are certainly kept by the group but individual shares in gross income do not seem to be formally arranged. There does no seem even here to be either a monetary evaluation of their own labour or any assessment of net profit as distinct from gross income. Receipts appear to go into a central treasury which is drawn on by agreement over each specific case.
- Although there is present considerable financial acumen this is a matter of peasant shrewdness rather than any real commercial understanding.

*159 - Yields are good - tomatoes will average 15 qantar
433 per tomna, grapes 10 qantar per tomna, but these
181 are attained by the careful application of
242 proverbial wisdom and not by the possession of better scientific understanding than their neighbours.

*159 - In spite of the fact that the syndicate's
181 capital reserves and their practical abilities
232 are considerable, the physical environment dom-
242 inates their actions. They are not prepared to experiment themselves and they look askance at those who are. One has an unhappy feeling that as already noted, their very success with traditional methods inhibits their acceptance of new ones. Thus even with farmers such as these there is a great mental gulf between them and typical farmers of Northern Europe and between them and their advisers.

*159 CASE IX : Antnin & Ġakbu (A long-established
472 partnership of two unrelated stock farmers now engaged in
464 cows' milk production.)

Both these men are married and occupy houses in the same street. They have operated as a single farming unit during their whole working lives and it is not always clear whether even they can distinguish which property belongs to each. The teenage eldest sons of each man work full-time with their fathers whose wives occasionally assist with

* field-work.

159 Some few years ago the two friends had 36 goats. By
178 1958 only two remained and the emphasis had swung to cows'
234 milk production. In 1956 they had about 18 cows; eighteen months later the joint herd had doubled in size. Their aim has been to build up as large a herd as possible as quickly as possible in order to benefit from the guaranteed price offered by the M.M.U. for milk produced. The two men insist that they are at the same time striving to build up a

159 178 234 substantial herd to hand over to their sons who, however, show no inclination to stay in farming.

*159 232 829 234 A glance at their herd reveals their interest to be in quantity rather than quality. They admit, moreover, that they lack a good deal of knowledge on management of a herd of this size. A number of their cattle die from diseases and ailments of which Antnin and Ġakbu have little appreciation - official sources revealed that two which died in 1957 had anthrax. Their own inclination is to slaughter an ailing animal for meat before it dies naturally. If a cow dies without replacement from the Government they become very resentful. They also suffer a high death rate among imported calves and again blame 'Government'. "The Government never tells us anything about the rearing of animals" assert the two men somewhat naively since they also maintain that "no-one but the farmers knows farming".

*159 234 231 In 1958, twelve of the cattle were Bastard-Inglizi type As the sanitary authorities would not grant a license for a larger herd to occupy the present makeshift accommodation (a patch-work, corrugated iron shed) Antnin and Ġakbu aimed to replace these Bastard-Inglizi with the same number of Friesian stock, though would have preferred to have gone on increasing the number in their herd - and thereby the amount of milk sold to the M.M.U.

*159 234 433 [246] Antnin insists that "cows yield according to the amount they are fed". When asked for an estimate of the cost of producing a gallon of milk he asks "Who knows?" ("Min jaf?"). The fields held by the two men produce a considerable amount of fodder but much more has to be purchased. During glut conditions they feed very cheap cauliflower and, in the dry months between June and September, give the herd prickly pear at the rate of a lorry-load per day. They are almost unique among cows' milk producers in Malta and Gozo in that they are able to graze their animals on War Department land nearby although they have no guarantee of tenure.

*159 434 426 Despite the large holding of land and the recent rapid increase in the size of the herd, the financial position of Antnin and Ġakbu is precarious in the extreme. They are operating in a permanent state of DEBT, and have a fluctuating debit account with the dealer who supplies them with fodder (cf. Case V). This makes them reluctant to take on any new debts at high interest rates. The Government loans at 1% do however appeal to them as means of buying more cattle and still further increasing their milk production. Their debt is such that the two friends can rarely keep female calves but have to sell them to pay hire-purchase instalments on cows.

*159 198 829 [454] Their approach to farming is in fact a set of contradictions. With no capital reserves they are making every effort to expand their herd even though this means continued debt. They are full of "our rights as farmers" and yet "suspicious of the Government and what it says". As with milk, "the Government ought to be responsible for the marketing of field produce". On the other hand Antnin is "against co-operatives in farming", although he has never had any experience of any co-operative or farmers' union. They claim to be building up their farm and herd in order to be able to hand over a substantial business to their sons; but their constant complaint is that "Farming is finished in Malta" ("Il-biedja f'Malta spiċċat"), and the avowed intent of both sons is "to leave farming where we earn nothing". They talk of leaving to "get a job" as if farming itself is something less than a 'job'.

CASE IX : Summary.

*159 423 (A long-established partnership of two unrelated stock farmers now engaged on cows'milk production.)

A. Land.

[429] Approximately 100 tmien of dry land in south-east Malta, the bulk in one compact block but with several outlying plots. The exact limits are uncertain since some land owned or rented by others is worked by the partnership. 25 plots are held from several landlords, Defence Dept. being the most important, and there is access to a good deal of grazing land, generally held at low rents from Defence Depts.

*159 241 B. Utilisation.

	1957	1958
Plot 1	Sulla	Wheat
Plot 2	Potatoes, peas, beans, onions.	Potatoes, cauliflowers
Plot 3	Potatoes, sulla	Wheat
Plot 4	Used as a pig sty	
Plot 5	Wheat	Wheat
Plot 6	Sulla	Sulla
Plot 7	Sulla	Sulla
Plot 8	Some potatoes, cowshed, exercise yard, manure heap and pig sties.	
Plot 9	Fallow	Plowed
Plot 10	Sulla	Wheat
Plot 11	Sulla	Plowed
Plot 12	Beans, barley	Wheat
Plot 13	Wheat	Sulla
Plot 14	Wheat	Sulla
Plot 15	Wheat, sulla	Beans
Plot 16	Wheat	Beans
Plot 17	Potatoes	Wheat, beans
Plot 18	Beans, barley	Potatoes, wheat
Plot 19	Yard and buildings	
Plot 20	Wheat	Barley
Plots 21-25	Wasteland grazing	

*159 23 C. Livestock.

Shifting emphasis in recent years.
- Cattle 1956: 18; 1957: 36.
- Goats "some years ago": 36; 1957: 2.
- Pigs 8.

159 days people fasted full forty days" (Ġamri); (ii) the Friday
262 Fast - it is forbidden to eat meat on Fridays and preferable
785 to avoid it on Wednesdays also; and (iii) Special Fasts.
These include the 'Change of Season' fasts and a variety of
Saints' Days, special personal observances and certain
occasional fasts designated by the Church authorities. The
emphasis is on self-denial in all fasts. Meat, confectionary
and 'extra' items are strictly avoided, and the quantity of
permitted foods is also reduced. Nothing is eaten between
the frugal meals.

159 The timing of meals throughout the day is variable in
262 Ġamri's family. Rarely does he sit down to table with his
264 wife and children, whose routine has to accommodate school
time-tables, etc. On non-fast days breakfast consists of
bread and coffee. Lunch is taken about noon - or an hour or
so earlier on fast-days. If he is working in the fields
Ġamri may have a loaf of bread, with oil, cheese, figs,
olives, chickpeas and corn beef or some fish, or some cooked
meal may be brought out to him by one of the women or girls.
Sweet black coffee or home-made wine are the staple drinks,
and the meal is normally followed by a siesta of at least
one hour. The time of the evening meal depends on the nature
and pressure of work in hand and consists of a stew (espe-
cially where the lunch had been a cold meal in the fields).
[261] At all times food is used carefully. It is never wasted.
Even produce of the farm such as eggs are "only given to the
boys occasionally" (Ġamri).

198 The proportion of food purchased is now much greater
291 than even a generation ago in this type of family. The same
443 is true of clothing. Clothing has changed very considerably
[432] both in style and variety since Ġamri's father was a young
[294] farmer when half the people in the village had looms and
many had spinning wheels to produce cotton garments for the
family or other villagers. The old style of dress of the
farmer consisted of knee-length, white cotton trousers, a
thick woollen vest, waistcoat and cummerbund. The locally
produced sheep's wool vest has been largely replaced by army
surplus types of shirts. Garments of Maltese cotton and
wool are now rarely seen except on the oldest men, who have
been wearing them since they were much younger. The use of
army surplus clothing has become very common since 1945 and
the travelling drapers' vans, local shops and the Sunday
markets (Valletta and Rabat) now do a considerable trade in
both made up garments and materials of this type.

291 With the increasing contact between town and country
369 the farmer has come to want smarter suits for his brief
178 leisure hours. The younger generation of countryfolk no
longer venture to the capital unless they are dressed like
townsmen - suit, tie, shoes and so on. This increase in the

This increase in the

178 291 [511] [871] [702] range of demands along with the near disappearance of home-produced garments has therefore required a much enlarged financial outlay on this part of the family budget. The villager now often takes a special pride in the clothing of his children, both the infants and those attending school. The compulsory attendance at school throughout the Islands has made the countryman more clothes-conscious, while the War of 1939-45 and the conscription which it brought put some men into shoes (or boots) for the first time and demanded that they be dressed to a rather higher standard than had been their practice before.

Work and Labour

* 159 241 461 464 As seen, Ġmri's normal labour force consists of himself, his brother and nephew. His own children being all below school-leaving age contribute relatively little. This trio apportioned their time, during the agricultural year 1956-57 when a detailed study was made, as under:

(a) Work on crop land, including cultivation, manuring, sowing, irrigation, crop protection, harvesting and transport of produce

(i) on the joint holding	- fruit.....	1740	man/hours
	- vines.....	489	" "
	- cereals & fodder...	1437	" "
	- potatoes...	868	" "
	- other vegetables...	505	" "
(ii) on Ġmri's own holding	- vines....	444	" "
	- cereals & fodders..	222	" "
	- vegetables	65	
(b) Other work connected with holding.....		109	" "
(c) Repair of storm damage.....		160	" "
(d) Building of pig-sties.....		100	" "
(e) Miscellaneous.....		677	" "
		6816	man/hours

In short, a total of 6818 man/hours was applied to about 62 tmien of land (excluding contractors' plowing etc.) an average of 110 man/hours per tomna. The above data are based on a daily work record kept by the farmer during the agricultural year 1956-57. The material may also be analysed on the basis of his calendar of activity on the farm for the year (Summary, E), and may be compared with a parallel work-analysis for two other farmers who provided a similar diary of their movements. Whereas Ġmri is an arable- and fruit-farmer, working largely dry (bagħli) fields and terraces, the other two examples chosen for comparative purposes include a man whose farm nucleus is a large and fertile irrigable (saqwi) block (Case XI) and one who is a herdsman with fields producing fodder for his goats together with some vegetables for sale and for family use (Case II).

000 In the first two cases the seasonal distribution of

In the first two cases the seasonal distribution of activity reflects the major points of contrast between the 'dry' and 'irrigated' operator. The herdsman stands in contrast to both of these with the care of his animals occupying a large part of every day of the year - even including Sundays and feste days when the field-working farmer expects to be off duty.

Ġanri and farming

Ġanri is a highly intelligent man in his forties who by his own efforts has progressed well beyond the limits of his very elementary formal education. He reads the Maltese-language daily 'Il-Berqa' (B/55) and keeps abreast of the school work of his children whom he encourages to learn English thoroughly as "the land cannot be divided among them all". English language is synonomous with education in his thinking, and education, in turn, he sees as the means of escape from the lowly position of the farmer in Maltese society. "We are but an Arab breed", he observes somewhat ashamedly. He himself has "little faith in the Government - which should help us". Much of this attitude had its roots in the War years of 1939-45 when the siege and food shortages produced something of a Golden Age for the food-producer. The farmer has not forgotten the £10 offered by the Government for 1 cwt of potatoes. Since the return to peace-time conditions the economic position of the farmer has certainly deteriorated rapidly with the depletion in his reserves, built up during hostilities, and the rise in labour costs and in the cost of living. During the War "the farmer was not so hungry as the townsman who had to rely on the black market"; now his position is one of a constant battle with rising costs. Ġanri, as an arable farmer, lacks the steady and guaranteed income of the milk-producing herdsman. His recent moves towards pig-meat production represent an attempt to get into an apparently more profitable line.

His nephew and many other farmers, though not Ġanri himself, make the mistake of failing to distinguish between the Church and the Government in their attitude to "the authorities". Thus the nephew regards the Catholic Action movement (of which he is an active member) as somehow "helping to run the country". But even Ġanri himself thinks that the Social Action Movement (another part of the Church's Lay Apostolate) must have some part in the secular administration of the country for he believes that an application for relief for storm damage made, through the Parish Priest, to that Movement amounts to an approach to the 'Gvern' (Government) of which he is so full of criticism. The case illustrates a point made elsewhere that the Maltese farmer is still primarily village-conscious. Clearly this is not to deny, however, that his horizon today is much wider than was the case when his father regarded

159 829 181 198 Valletta as a mysterious other-world to be entered cautiously and very occasionally by the humble and bare-foot farmer.

Ġanri is typical of the section of the farming community in Malta and Gozo which has absorbed an education beyond anything in previous generations but whose age prevents them taking the lead into any kind of Maltese farming reconciled with current social, economic and technical changes. He is "too old now to move from farming", but he is encouraging his children to acquire the education which will help them to escape from the land altogether.

CASE X : Summary.

159 423 427 (An arable farmer (Ġ) in partnership with his brother and engaged in diversified production.)
(Details refer to Ġ alone unless otherwise indicated.)

A. Land.

- Ġ has an interest in 17 plots totalling 62.5 tmien; of this, 53 tmien is rented by the partnership.
- One large plot of 21.5 tmien, the remainder ranging from 1.0 to 8.0 tmien.
- All within an area of c.1 sq. mile in the Binġemma Basin and in Ġnejna, on a variety of soils, mainly Terra Rossa and Carbonate Raw Soils.
- 41.0 tmien owned by private landlords, 9.6 by the Church, 6 tmien by the Government, and 3.2 by Ġ's father.
- Rent approx. £30 p.a. varying from 8/- to 14/- per tomna.

159 241 B. Utilisation.

- The full range of crops grown in a complete year (1957-8) is shown in Table 6 (WORK ANALYSIS).
- In summary:

Fruit and vines	20.9	tmien
Cereals and fodders	17.9	"
Potatoes	6.2	"
Other vegetables	4.9	"
Fallow or unproductive or lot 'bin-nofs'.	12.6	"
	62.5	tmien

159 233 C. Livestock.

- Relatively unimportant in early 1957, but a herd of pigs is being built up and in 1958 numbered five sows and their litters.
- One mule.
- 2 goats, 2 sheep; milk is purchased as these do not supply family's needs.
- 2 dozen hens, rabbits.

159 423 454 D. Capital.

(i) - No freehold land apart from one small patch of roadside waste.
(ii) - Recent investment in the construction of pig-sties.
(iii) - Cash reserve of £400 in April 1958 represents a reduction of 50% on reserve held a year previously; £200 spent on building up pig herd and accommodation for same; remainder covered deficit on year's farming and special expenses e.g. road surfacing, hospital expenses etc. Ġ expects to build up his cash reserve again in ensuing years.

159 409 427 (iv) - Equipment:
- Usual hand tools, cart, etc.
- Ġ owns no mechanical equipment but his brother's rotary cultivator is used on the joint holding, Ġ

*159 241

for January planting at 3-4 cwt. per tomna. Seed from crop used for sowing in following autumn.

(4) - Manure.

- Mixed urban refuse and animal manure plowed in to 12-18 inches.
- One field of 2 tmien received 1 truck load refuse and 30 sacks dry manure.
- One field of 1.5 tmien received 50 sacks of animal manure from G's stock.
- Vines receive c. ½ cwt. artificial fertiliser per tomna almost every year.
- Wheat receives from ½ to 1 cwt. artificial fertiliser per tomna per year, broadcast with the seed.

H. General.

*159 [402] [423] [464] [178]

- Partnership has prevented excessive fragmentation of father's land.
- Free exchange of labour allows G to maintain a relatively large holding despite the inability of his young children to assist him. If these children wish to continue in farming, pressure on land will result.
- G therefore encourages his children in their education with a view to emigration and/or employment outside farming.

[435] [451] [461]

- G has no real idea of costing of his production. Can give details of income and expenditure, but makes no allowance for enormous application of labour (see E) necessary for very modest income (see F).
- Willing to undertake still more labour (e.g. in spraying fruit trees) to avoid cash expenditure.

[157]

- All this despite the fact that G is well above average in intelligence and standard of education.
- Conservative in techniques and attitudes but eager to invest in proven successes (e.g. extension of vines and apple orchards, development of pig-farming). However, markets may already be glutted.
- With clear, patient, reasoned and disinterested advice and encouragement, G could probably much improve his methods and yields to make his holding a more profitable enterprise.

*159 423

CASE XI : Pietru (An arable farmer mainly concerned with irrigated produce.)

The nucleus of Pietru's farm is a block of 14 irrigable tmien on which he spends the greater part of his time. His home is about a mile away in the village and he also holds a large number of patches of dry (baghli) land scattered over the northern part of Malta. The more outlying of these dry fields have tended to be neglected, or left to Pietru's wife and family to work, while he has concentrated on building up and developing his irrigable holding. His father bought four of these irrigable tmien after the 1914-18 War although at that time the area was covered with concrete. This was laboriously removed and irrigation channels ('canali') installed. Other adjacent patches were acquired as they became available - Pietru himself acquiring the latest addition in 1954. He had taken over from his father some years previously although he had started his working life as a mason.

*159 241 464

Today Pietru, his son, wife and daughters cultivate the 14 tmien very intensively. The suggestion of a pathway is rejected because "it would take up too much irrigable land".

*159 The larger pieces of ground are put to potatoes, tomatoes,
29 artichokes (qaqoċċ), marrows (qargħa baghli), and a variety
311 of vegetables. Fig, pomegranate and other trees fill the corners and edges of fields and a tomato seed-bed and a hen-
[406] house also manage to find space in odd corners. Two machine-
[343] driven pumps and a few tiny storage and shelter rooms complete
[134] the scene. The block of fields is in a small sheltered valley on the east coast of the Island and contains clay soils tending to be heavy, especially in wet weather.

*159 Pietru's irrigable fields are clearly the focus of his
241 interest and attention. He observes that they bring in a
433 greater profit per man/day of effort than do the dry fields
434 which he prefers to leave to the wife and children to culti-
829 vate on a more casual basis. Nevertheless Pietru is not able
[464] to make a profitable concern of his farm despite his own heavy working schedule and the full-time assistance of at least two teenage children. In fact he is poor enough to qualify for C.A.R.E.[27] food distributions. He is however content with farming as an occupation and critical only of the lack of adequate remuneration. His attitude is to 'make the most' of his farm within current limitations. He was a
[474] founder member of a C.A.R.E. sponsored tractor co-operative (Section 2) although he admits that when the project was first suggested he was opposed to it on the grounds of rather having the money than letting the Government get it. This belief that the Government is behind everything is characteristic (Section 4). C.A.R.E. is of course an independent organization distributing American surplus food and equipment.

*159 Thus Pietru's son who works full-time with his father is
●178 faced with his father's industry and enthusiasm for farming on
241 the one hand but he can see for himself the apparent impossibility of achieving anything above low living standards. Whether he will join the trek away from farming is not yet clear. His educational standard is lower than is the case among many of his generation and it may be that he will have difficulty in finding employment outside farming.

If Pietru can improve the efficiency and profitabily of his farm (by using better suited crops, new methods and new equipment with Government financial and advisory assistance) his son might be pursuaded to stay in it. The problem of Maltese farming today is that there are very few young men in the farming industry who show as much inclination to
[412] stay on the land. The Government has been keen to assist
[654] the full-time farmer with loans and other help in an effort to encourage him to stay on the land and to develop agriculture to the full but it has done comparatively little for the young men in farming who are, in the long term view at least, the more important. If they cannot be induced to stay in farming the industry would appear to be doomed.

was taken for granted.

(iii) Reasonably prepared to try new crops if they are proven in his district. Not prepared to accept anything technically as revolutionary as a wheelbarrow mainly on the ground that "it is not used here".

CASE XII : Ċenzu (A cows' milk producer and village weighman.)

Ċenzu is an example of one type of part-time farmer in Malta and Gozo in that his farm is the more important of the two occupations for his livlihood. His work as licensed village weighman is important both because of the extra income which it brings and on account of the social standing which goes with the office. He is a shrewd and literate man who earlier in his life also engaged in importing and other business. He was one of the many farmers able to build up a substantial reserve as a result of the 1939-45 War. The house is spacious and well-appointed by local standards and Ċenzu and his small family enjoy comfortable living conditions. His pre-War premises were damaged during the War and he received some £1800 official compensation to which he added a further £1200. This money was put towards the new house and towards the costs of building up his present herd of 12 cows, a bull and 10 goats. The milk produced and sold to the M.M.U. provides the basic element of his income but he also grows cash crops for sale. In the 1956/57 winter a third of his crop area was devoted to fodder. This increased to 74% in the following winter but, given a substantial improvement in the prevailing prices for cash crops, it is likely that he would devote more space once again to these and buy in a larger part of the fodder needed. In 1957 he purchased over £1000 worth of fodder and received about £1350 for milk sold during the same period.

Unlike most farmers he keeps detailed records of his income and expenditure on the farm and animals and on the weighing side of his business, but he remains unwilling to discuss his revenue with even apparently trusted outsiders. This reticence seems to relate to the traditional independent outlook of the farmer rather than to any anxiety to hide his accounts from a sense of guilt. He was prepared to join the Malta Milk Company (Il-Kumpanija Maltija tal-Halib) because he saw this as of some benefit to the milk producer in his relations with the M.M.U. authorities. But he has never been a member of a farmers' union and is clearly not interested in them although he thinks "A union might be a good idea". He shares the typical failure to appreciate the rôle of an efficient Union. Neither is he interested in joining a producers' Co-operative (Section 4).

As village-weighman he has a high social standing in the

*159 As village-weighman he has a high social standing in the
829 district. His literacy, spacious house, and herd of cows
●178 further enhance his status. He maintains that within the
[554] village the place of the Parish priest is as ever it was
[793] "in spite of the new learning". He notes that the increas-
[626] ing number of dissenting voices in the village are kept
firmly in their place by the pressure of public opinion but
[177] that political rivalry, a comparatively recent feature in
the village, is growing. The returning emigrant brings new
ideas - including some on religion - but the strength of
[794] the Church remains much less questioned than is the case in
the towns. Censu shares the still general view that money
[651] given to the Church is "payment towards the good of the
community". Money paid to the Government in the form of
taxes would, on the other hand, be regarded as an imposition
bringing no benefit to the individual, and therefore to be
avoided.

CASE XII : Summary.

*159 (A cows' milk producer and village weighman.)

423 A. Land.
427 33 Tmien in Mqabba-Kirkop Plain:
4 Field plots in 3 parcels, on Terra Rossa Soils and Xero-Rendzinas.
All leased from 2 landlords: Total rent £34 per annum.

*159 B. Utilisation.
24 Over 5 Tmien wasteland.
Main concentration on fodder, which accounted for 74% crop area in 1957/58, as against only 33% in 1956/57 winter season.
2 tmien under barley - pulled green.
3 tmien under sulla.
6¼ tmien under vetches.
5 tmien under wheat.
c.10 tmien under potatoes.
Remainder under vegetables, prickly pear and fallow.
Main cash crops potatoes and onions.

*159 C. Livestock.
231 Late 1957 - 13 head of cattle (10 milch cows, 2 calves, 1 service bull). All Maltese Friesian. 10 goats;
234 1 ewe; 2 horses; 50 poultry; rabbits.
This herd was built up from 6 goats, 4 sheep and 1 cow in 1938.

*159 D. Capital.
[423] - No freehold land. Owns large village house.
[454] - No statement as to capital reserves but general evidence suggests a sum of the order of £1500.
[407] - Equipment - no machinery, but normal range of local tools.

*159 E. Labour.
464 - Family labour - one 30 year old son.
- In 1956 male hired labour amounted to 60 days, and female to 90 days.
[465] Cost - men c.£1 a day, women c.14/- a day.
Hand labour almost entirely for sowing during autumn and winter and harvesting in early summer.
[429] - Hires heavy tractor plow, rotary cultivator and
241 threshing machine each year. Costs of contract
[407] plowing 15/- to £1 a tmien.

*159 433 451 land but maintains that it is becoming uneconomic because of high labour costs and difficulty of raising yields any further.

(iii) Makes careful practical distinctions between types of land:

*159 134 241
- some fields have 8 inches of soil on rock platform and these can only be worked by hand.
- deeper soils up to 3 feet thick need periodic deep plowing although this may result in the bringing to the surface of "newba" (or "melh" - salt) - sub-surface saline concentration with harmful results.
- red and white soils have different characteristics for tillage and crop-growth.
- notes the presence of a thin, very hard weathered layer on top of Globigerina bed rock. This "skorča tal-blat" is believed to prevent the movement of moisture from the rock water-table to overlying soil.

*159 159 626 (iv) In spite of literacy, general initiative and acumen he is conservative about trying new ideas. Here, as elsewhere, the chief obstacle appears to be social rather than economic - the fear of being different and the fear of failure in the eyes of the rest of the community.

*159 829 (v) In spite of (possibly because of) experience in check-weighing, is no more prepared to trust M.M.U. and official marketing agencies than any other farmer.

CASE XIII : Toni (A part-time arable farmer and caretaker of a military camp.)

*159 241 434 An example of part-time farming in which the field operations are the subsidiary part of the business - from the financial point of view though not as regards the amount of time spent on them.

His caretaking duties bring him some £5 per week for most of the year and yet leave him with enough free time to cultivate several irrigable patches near the camp. Now aged nearly seventy he works a much smaller total area than the thirty tmien of his younger days. He could in fact live on his income from his caretaking and continues to work the fields for four reasons:

(a) To provide food for his present family of three,
(b) To produce a supplementary income from the sale of cash crops,
(c) To occupy his time with the farming which he knows - as something of a hobby,
(d) To provide his emigrated sons each "with a piece of land" when they return to Malta for their retirement.

241 198 46 *[159] Items (b) and (c) reflect his independence of farming for the maintenance of himself and his wife and daughter, while (c) and (d) suggest that although farming ceases to be the countryman's livlihood he inclines to retain a residual interest in it even when he has been away from Malta for the greater part of his working life. This is a characteristic [369] feature of rural Malta and an important aspect of the recent increase in part-time farming. The 1957 Census of Agri- [162] culture lists 9,588 part-time as against 7,813 full-time farmers (B/164, p.20). The trend towards part- in place of full-time farming is significant in the present overall retreat from agriculture. It represents in many cases a

241 first stage in the move from the land and one expects it to
●178 be succeeded, possibly in the following generation, by a com-
461 plete break with the land or the maintenance of a purely residual and casual interest, as in (d) above. In this
*[159] case, Toni continues to produce cash crops for sale but his sons when they return are not likely to do so. Thus this type of small scale part-time farming will have little or no importance in agriculture as a producing industry.

*159 Toni himself substantiates this view. "Farming has no
241 future in Malta since there is no money in it for the younger
178 generations, and so you can't expect people to go on working
829 fields if they can avoid it". He sees the farming population as a depressed class and attributes this in large part to the fact that "The farmers count for only 12,000 votes at election times". Unions are, for Toni, "no use for the farmer and his problems" because, it appears, of suspicion and ignorance. He further observes that "the Maltese farmer grumbles easily - because of the same factors. This is itself discouraging the younger farming generation from staying on the land and struggling against rising costs to sell products which are but feeble competitors against the imported article.

He remains dubious of the effects of even the present Government policy of assistance by both financial support in various forms and attempts to introduce more efficient methods and better adapted and therefore more profitable crops, etc.

CASE XIII : Summary.

*159 (A part-time arable farmer and caretaker of a military camp.)
423 A. Land.
- 2 plots of irrigated land at il-Ghadira and il-Hofra both in the Mellieha Isthmus area.
- Several plots of dry land, usually held idle for relatives who are expected to return from Canada.
[427] - Soils: i-Iklin complex.
- Rented from Civil Government and War Department.

*159 B. Utilisation.
[241]
- Irrigated plots carry potatoes, tomatoes and vines with a great variety of vegetables.
- Dry land: potatoes, tomatoes, beans, sulla, onions, herbs for home consumption.

[231] C. Livestock. 60 or 70 rabbits, 1 sheep.

*159 D. Capital.
454
422
423
- No freehold land, but owns a house in the village.
- Usual hand tools.
- Spray and rotary cultivator recently acquired.
- Financial position not disclosed but appears to have considerable reserves.
- Owns a car.
- Son owns motor lorry sometimes used on holding.

*159 E. Labour.
464
[465]
- Some help from wife and daughter but remainder of family have either emigrated or entered non-agricultural employment in Malta.
- Formerly hired a labourer at £5 per week but he left for the Dockyard in 1955. In 1958 it was difficult

*159 241 829 of these problems is without solution and he puts a great part of the blame on the Maltese farmer himself who is prevented says Ġ by his illiteracy and suspicion from uniting and from seeking to improve his own farming. He maintains that it is possible to make money in farming today in the Islands, but only with the right methods, ideas and facilities. This is where he himself comes in, for he believes his ideas on mechanization are the answer, leading to the elimination of hand labour as far as possible. He insists that a profitable farm must be a workable unit, that is a large patch of twenty, forty or more tmies capable of being worked by mechanical implements. Moreover, he insists that the farmer should, where possible, sell his own produce to the consumer in order to evade the 'middle-men' and thereby make a greater profit.

Ġanni himself talks vaguely of acquiring such a farm, although to date his contract-plowing has absorbed all his profit-making energies.

Ġanni's view of the farmer in Malta.

He lays a great deal of the blame for the present agricultural difficulties at the door of the farmers themselves. His view of his fellow farmers and villagers approaches cynicism: "The farmer's illiteracy prevents him from admitting that anything could be better than that which he knows. It also prevents him from trusting other farmers and prevents him from realizing the folly of putting bad-weight with produce for export. The young people who are far from illiterate and will listen to reason are not staying on the land long enough for this to be of lasting benefit to agriculture". He observes that the farmer is keen for a sure profit but not at all anxious to plunge his often considerable capital into [178] a new venture such as buying a tractor. In fact he will not accept any new method or crop before he sees it a working success - preferably in a field near his own. This applied particularly to the 'outlandish' ideas on deep-plowing which Ġanni brought back from Australia. His fellow villagers regarded his 16" mould-board, three-furrow plows with great suspicion, and his ideas on potato-ridging, combine-harvesting and threshing met with no more approval initially.

[454] Ġanni insists that the farmer's saving is merely "an aimless accumulation of money: a man may look poor in dress and have £1000 tucked away". He says of an old lady in a nearby lonely house "She wears no shoes and has never been to Valletta but will die leaving thousands".

181 241 829 This conservatism and reluctance on the part of the illiterate farmer emerges, therefore, as a major difficulty in the way of improvement and modification. It is one which tends to be overlooked by well-meaning experts and officials who forget that, unlike themselves, the farmer is unable to

*159 156 461 626 517 493 make money, but he has little sympathy for the older people around him and they in their turn regard him as a social (as well as economic) rebel. He takes little part in the social life of the village. Work is his first concern and he is most annoyed when the priest, with whom he has "not been on speaking terms" since his return from Australia, forbids his working on Sundays. This includes even repair work on the machinery indoors. He knows well enough that were he to plow on Sundays or fests days he would be "publically ostracised and no villager would hire him and his plow". His relaxation is his motor-cycle on which he escapes at high speed from time to time along with others of his generation who "have eyes for the lights of Valletta rather than farming".

*159 156 593 Towards his own parents Ġanni's attitude is typical. He regards his father as belonging to the old generation of illiterate or semi-literate countryfolk, steeped in the conservatism of the past and the traditional. Father and son argue continuously over points of policy - with Ġanni tending to assume that his education and wider experience entitles him to something of a 'casting vote' in such arguments. Nevertheless the family tie is there and is strong enough for Ġanni to have an innate respect for his father despite the gulf in education and ideas. Thus Ġanni supported his father's scheme to plant some cotton even though he himself doubted the profitability of this move (1958).

*159 156 [583] Marriage in Malta, where the "evil dowry" ('data') system is maintained, holds little attraction for Ġanni. He observes that he cannot take a girl out on his motor-cycle without the older people of the village criticising him for not marrying her first. This and the whole social climate of village life in Malta of which it is part clashes with the ways he learned in Australia and with the ideas and beliefs which his education and his knowledge of the world outside the village of his birth have brought him.

Ġanni is primarily important to the village because he is staying there. He takes little part in village affairs, he does not "bother about festas", and he has few close friends in his age group of farmers. But his ideas and the new methods and implements which he has brought to the village in face of considerable opposition and ridicule are a significant item in the changing scene of Maltese farming.

CASE XV

*159 407 407 OUD Three brothers work together as a team. Their father works the land full-time and the brothers join him when their joint tractor-hire business is not claiming their attention. Their mechanical activities began some twenty-two years ago and now extend over more than a sixth of the area of Malta. They appear to have been among the first in the tractor

*159 400 407 479 He insists that the Government should stop imports of new machines in face of the present decline in the demand for contract deep-plowing. He sees himself and many farmer-contractors like him going out of business in the near future.

CASE XI?

This farmer (working 35 tmian, including seven irrigable) was among the first to acquire machinery in the 1930's. He [178] speaks of the slow start made in deep-plowing on account of the suspicion of most farmers who continued to use the mule or horse-drawn wooden plow exclusively for some years. Mechanized plowing is now fully accepted, he says, and, for the contracting plowman, is still a most profitable venture despite the present fierce competition for business.

CASE XX

X 154 407 241 434 Whereas CASE XIV-XIX have concerned plowing and threshing contractors whose own fields are of secondary importance as a source of income, this man is typical of the growing number of farmers who see mechanization as the means whereby they themselves can cultivate a large holding. With his single tractor he cultivates some 35 tmian single handed and supplements his income from this holding by only a limited amount of contract-plowing in the summer season.

[245] He notes that a further reason for the decline in demand [178] for the deep-plow on contract is the recent increase in the area under vines (due to the steady demand for wine-grapes by local vintners).

CASE XXI

*154 256 241 407 472 [477] This Gozitan is a part-time contract plowman whose main occupation is not farming but baking. His father was a salt-seller but this business went to a brother shortly before the 1939-45 War whereupon this man decided to go in for full-time contract plowing and threshing. For many years he remained the sole such operator in his village and business grew. However in the present decade competition from new tractor operators has "halved the work available in the summer plowing season" for his plows and threshing machine. This prompted him to build a bakery in 1954 to which he has since devoted all his time. However the tractor and threshing machine are still retained and are worked by a son as the demand arises.

CASE XXII

X 154 441 472 407 [191] Another Gozitan, this English-speaking and astute man is not himself a contract plowman but is a dealer and agent for tractors, rotary cultivators and other agricultural machinery. His father began the import of tractors to the Island, but these were wheeled and soon found to be unsatisfactory for local conditions. The first 'crawling' tractor was introduced in 1939 and has since been found to be well suited to the steep paths and fields and the small plots in Gozo, especially in wet weather. Since 1951 the use of rotary cultivators has spread rapidly through the Island and has led to a sharp decline in the work available to the deep-plowing tractors. Of twelve of the latter at present in the Island some three or four are normally unused in the season. This agent speaks of an agreement among the tractor operators of Gozo to limit individual spheres of operation during the 1957 plowing season.

[178] Like CASE XIV this man has been prepared to introduce new implements. His father was the first to import motor pumps (1920), while he himself brought in the first cultivator in 1951. His latest idea has been the import of harvesting machines, but the very limited success of the first ten which he brought in has discouraged him from buying any more. He observes that the fields of Gozo are too small for mechanization on this scale and that the harvester leaves a lot of straw in the ground which the farmer insists must be collected for animal fodder.

159 251 441 511

Socially and economically this man is not a farmer. For two generations the machine importing and other business dealing of the family have given them something of a middle-class status in the village. Their standard of living and the house they occupy reflect their above-average prosperity while their literacy and foreign contacts have further enhanced their social standing.

226 463

PART 3. A Note on the Fishermen of Malta and Gozo.

The fishermen of the Maltese Islands deserve mention in this report as their position today has many points in common with that of the farmers.

226 463 162

A 1957 estimate put their number at 840 (R/177 - 1957, Section F, p.1). This represented about 1% of the total gainfully occupied population at the time and is equivalent to only 11% of the number of full-time farmers in the Islands, although only about half of the 840 appear to be full-time fishermen. "Many are engaged in the industry for part of the year only and they usually have an laternative occupation ashore" (R/250, p.13).

226 463 198

Burdon, in his 1956 report, sums up the present condition of the fishermen : "The most remarkable feature of the industry is the diversity of methods which individual fishermen use. Some fishermen are more advanced than others, but in general they are progressive and their knowledge of the local fisheries is extensive. Unfortunately they have little contact with the world beyond Malta and do not learn of new developments in fishing technique. This is aggravated by the comparatively low standard of education" (R/250, pp.13-14).

871

The parallel with farming and farmers in Malta is clear. Burdon observes that recent developments "make it imperative that vocational training should be given to the fishermen. This must be simple in form and should be taken to the fishermen - i.e. the classes must be held in the fishing centres at times when the fishermen are available. But such measures are unlikely to meet with success if confined to the fishermen whose livelihood depends upon fishing whenever the weather permits. Special attention must, therefore, be paid to the children of the fishermen who will become the fishermen of tomorrow" (R/250, p.14).

226 463 891 829 014

The present writer holds that the need for education in agriculture is exactly parallel to Burdon's recommendation. But, whereas a start on these lines has already been made in farming (Section 4), nothing has been done in the case of fishing, although the need for the technical education of the fishermen has been stressed since as long ago as 1931 (R/237, p.47). There are still no qualified Maltese skippers (R/250, p.14) and, for work in the more distant grounds off Lampedusa and Sicily, Italians are employed. They are regarded with some awe by local fishermen for their literacy, technical knowledge and the rather higher wages which they can command.

000 can command.

226 There has, however, been material help to fishing in the
463 form of financial assistance[31] and the introduction of a
654 Fishing Equipment Supply Service (B/177 - 1957, Section F,
178 p.1), but the essence of the problem is, as in agriculture, that there is a retreat from fishing by the younger generation.

226 Marsaxlokk is the biggest fishing centre in the Islands
103 while, in Malta itself, Żurrieq - though not a port - comes
621 second by number of resident fishermen. In Gozo most fisher-
361 men live in Victoria and Xewkija, both inland settlements away from the fishing harbours of Marsalforn, Mġarr and Xlendi. Socially this residential distribution is important since only in Marsaxlokk is there a sufficient resident fishing population for one to talk of a 'fishing community'.

361 Marsaxlokk achieved parochial status in 1897 but the
226 village is still without many 'modern' attributes such as cinema, resident doctor, barber and certain shopping facilities for which the fisherman goes to Żejtun. His interest is
[484] primarily the sea and many fishermen visit the 'town' only
[443] for the fish market. In Marsaxlokk itself the fishermen
[512] gather for Church and gossip on Sunday mornings; the rest of their weekly schedule is governed by the weather and the season.

226 As a class the fishermen and their families are economi-
463 cally lower than the farmers. In February, 1958, about
551 10.4% of the estimated 840 fishermen were poor enough to
511 qualify for C.A.R.E. relief (v. Section 3). At the same
162 time only 9% of farmers were entitled to supplies on the same basis, and the average for the total population was lower still at 8.2%.

226 The fisherman is regarded, even by the farmer, as low on
463 the social scale. This, together with the generally
554 depressed standard of living of the fishing community despite
178 the present official financial assistance, is producing exactly the same position as in agriculture. The younger generation is not prepared to accept the industry as it is nor the way of life based on it.

113 The War of 1939-45 gave rise to a crop of literature in
175 Italy, Britain and other countries with solitary Malta as the object of both propaganda and admiration.

191 As to language, it is clear the War finally killed the
197 greater part of the pro-Italian feeling in Malta and confir-
177 med English as the first foreign tongue of the people. It
178 had been a language of government for more than a century but had not replaced Italian in education or at law until the inter-War period. Italian had grown to first place under the Order and had maintained its position during British nineteenth century rule except in Government and commerce.

Maltese itself, meanwhile, had not escaped from its traditional rôle as 'kitchen-tongue' and, in fact, did not replace Italian as one of the two official languages of Malta until as late as 1934. Thereby Maltese achieved, for the first time, respectability in Malta. There has since been a considerable increase in the number of books and periodicals appearing in the language, along with general education and spread of literacy among a monoglot Maltese public. Over the same period the use of Italian has declined relatively (even in its traditional strongholds, the Church and the professional classes) and the demand for English has accelerated. In fact, for a small section of the urban population of Malta, English is now the mother-tongue and Maltese the second language. An illustration of
[204] the changed linguistic picture is afforded by the following classification of daily newspapers in Malta by language for 1888 ("Il Compagno per Tutti", 1888), 1920 (B/94 - 1920, p.333), 1933-34 (B/94 - 1933-34, p.409), and 1959 (B/97 - 1959, p.99).

	1888	1920	1933-34	1959
English.....	1	1	2	2
Italian.....	3	2	2	-
English and Italian...	-	-	1	-
Maltese.....	-	-	2	2

197 Since Maltese has approached respectability as a literary
214 language in its own country for only a quarter-century Maltese
[212] themselves have usually written in either Italian, as formerly, or in English, as is the case today. But, apart from this, it is clear that a Maltese language publication cannot expect to find a market outside the Islands nor among the significant section of the population, generally the professional and business classes, speaking English and Italian as well as Maltese but proud of their ability to read and write only one or both of the foreign languages and not their mother-tongue.

Maltese language publications today therefore tend solely to deal with Maltese matters and a public within Malta which lacks fluency in written English. Maltese language dictionaries and works of a philological or etymological nature are obvious exceptions to this - especially since the linguistic

of Maltese, with its semitic sub-strata and immense Italian and other European accretions, have attracted much attention among students of comparative linguistics abroad.

The circulation of the Maltese daily "Il-Berqa" (B/55) reflects the position in the Islands, being limited to the working and rural classes. Many periodicals of a religious or occupational nature, or those produced by some towns and villages, now appear in Maltese; others are bi-lingual. But a knowledge of English is now so widespread among the younger generation that one would expect it to consolidate its growing importance as the language of government, education and culture, with the use of written Maltese declining relatively - though growing in absolute terms with the extension of literacy.

Maltese language fiction and poetry exists today along with a great deal of religious writing. The present bibliography makes no attempt to cover this field although several of the Maltese writers concerned do appear in the general list (Part 8), while the principal store-houses of Maltese literature, the Royal Malta Library (B/16) and the Royal University (B/17), and others, are mentioned in Part 1. Neither is any systematic coverage attempted of the wealth of material concerning the Knights Hospitallers and their sojourn in Malta though some of the principal sources are included in Parts 2 and 8.

Maps, plans and charts of the Islands are not included. Many of the collections listed in Part 1 contain such items (B/1, 5, 6, 16, etc.), the Naval and Military authorities in the Islands have made surveys, maps and charts as required, while many private individuals have added to the list. Reference to the official 2" to one mile map (Geographical Section, General Staff, No.3659, War Office, 3rd Edition - 1953) is recommended at all points in the present volume. Sheet 1 covers Gozo and Comino and Sheet 2 Malta. For Malta, more detailed coverage is provided by the 6" (O.S.G.S., No.3852) and the 25" to the mile (O.S.G.S., No.3752) maps. A valuable land-use survey in Malta (1955) and Gozo (1957) have provided the Islands' first detailed coverage of this nature (B/5, 336, 337). Also valuable is the indexed and comprehensive 'Malta Street Guide' (B/489).

The bibliography which follows attempts only a very basic classification into eight sections

Part 1... List of some collections of material on the Maltese Islands (B/1 - 17),

Part 2... List of some bibliographies on Maltese subjects (B/18 - 52),

Part 3... Sample list of some newspapers, periodicals and journals (B/53 - 85),

Part 4... Some almanacs, directories and year books (B/86 - 98),

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

[P. 1]

NOWHERE has the legacy of antiquity so binding a force in the practice of to-day, nowhere is the saying "our forefathers did so" accepted as a sufficing and imperative reason for following, in most cases blindly, in the ancestral groove as in Malta, where the long memories of the ages stir darkly in the popular mind, and the associations of many centuries have accumulated, as it were, stratum above stratum, upon the soil. 178

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

177 Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians,
178 Romans, Arabs, Normans, Germans, French, Spaniards, Aragonese & Knights of St. John have all been here, some for a short and some for a longer time, and they have nearly all left more or less their footprints on this Island and contributed their quota to the manners of the people.

The Maltese are as tenacious of the old usages and diversions, handed down to them from time immemorial, as any other people in the world. Although usage survives, motive, in most cases is forgotten, and as we will further observe the ideas of the older mythologies are sometimes altered to meet the exigencies of the new Creed.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

796 offered during the year, for the purpose
794 either of decorating or repairing the
798 church or churches of the parish to
431 which they belong.
354

It is also customary for every parish priest—on this special day, or on the day following—to present both the Bishop and the Governor of the Island with a
[643] two lb. candle. It is to be observed, however, that the candle given to the Governor is only a blessed one when he happens to profess the Roman Catholic Religion.

• 178 This giving of candles to both the
796 Bishop and the Governor—a continua-
354 tion of a custom that prevailed in the
793 time of the Order of St. John of Jeru-
431 salem, when the Grand Master was annually presented with a blessed candle on this day—is meant as a token of respect to each of the highest Ecclesiastical and Civil dignitaries of the Island.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

443 St. Anna, which are celebrated on the
527 24th, 25th, and 26th of July. These
[796] fairs, however, which were once very
• [178] popular, have now sunk into insignificance and most likely will before long entirely disappear.

443 Fairs have long been regularly held
191 in most parts of Europe and Asia, and they appear to have originated in the Church festivals, which were found to afford convenient opportunities for commercial transactions. The concourse of people being then so such greater than on other occasions.

USAGES

195 The ancient Maltese formerly kept
562 their wives in the strictest retirement. They held the opinion that women should never appear but twice in public,

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

[P.101]
[PP. 1–100 not processed]

VI

THE OLD THINGS

"Little or no distinction can be drawn between classic Myth and popular Fairy-tale: Myth was obviously once Fairy-tale, and what is often supposed to be mere Fairy-tale proves in many instances to be unsuspected Theology."—HAROLD BAYLEY, *The Lost Language of Symbolism.*

". . . But what made the People of the Hills go away?" Una asked. "Different things . . ." said Puck. "Most of them were foreigners who couldn't stand our climate. The fact is they began as Gods. The Phoenicians brought some . . . and the Gauls and the Jutes and the Danes and the Frisians and the Angles."[1]

It was not quite fair of Puck to talk of the Old Things as "foreigners." They have no nation. They belong to all nations. Puck himself is the "Mikum-Wess" of the American Indians, Pan of the Greeks, Krishna of the Hindus. The stories that men tell of him, the clothes he wears, the language he talks, may differ, but he is still Puck. He only seems a native.

As with comparative religion, so is it with folklore. All returns, full circle, to a point where pagan faiths, myths, customs, are rooted in some Age of Beginnings when Man was a frightened, groping child.

"After a while men simply left the Old Things alone . . ." Puck goes on. "The roofs of their temples fell in, and the Old Things had to scuttle out and pick up a living as they could."[2] Malta had been Christian and the Temple of Bel a waste of stones for centuries when Weland still held sway in England. It seems, therefore, the more surprising that traces of the "Old Things" remain in islands so anciently and

178 ● 795

[1] *Puck of Pook's Hill.* [2] *Puck of Pook's Hill*

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

178 795 so fervently Christian. The reason lies, perhaps, in their Catholicism. The Faith has a tolerant and not unfriendly eye for many of the Old Things. It is hard to think of St. Francis being unkind to a leprechaun.

The savants make much argument about Malta's folklore. The wish being often father to their able reasoning, they will prove from it that the Maltese are Phoenician or Arab or Italian with equal conviction. Like the Cornishman who will tell you that the Hobby Horse was invented to frighten away the French, the people themselves know little if anything of the reasons why certain tales are told, certain things done; but, from birth to grave, the Old Things—often recognisable, but always with their peculiar Maltese twist—make intermittent appearances in the lives of Zeppu[1] and Grez.[1]

Some of them even have so far won the good opinion of Mother Church as to be granted a place in her own ceremonies.

ON GETTING BORN

844 824 The Maltese baby—boy or girl—gets born with very little fuss, and is always welcome. In Gozo, or in what remains of country, some friend of the mother will assist the arrival of the little one, bringing into the house with her the withered bud of a certain rose. The flower is placed in water and slowly opens. At the moment of its fullest opening the child is born.

844 824 191 Here is clearly a very ancient magic. The association of the rose with Motherhood, with Life, and indeed with Godhead itself, is as old as time. In the Litany of Loretto, the Virgin Mother is invoked as "Rosa Mystica"—"Mystical Rose." Dante saw the innermost circle of the heavenly spheres as a rose. The Brahmins, the Persians, and the Jews all attached

844 824 a high mystic symbolism to the rose. The simple peasant, setting her rosebud in water, little knows what forgotten gods

[1] Popular personifications of the peasant and his wife.

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

538 Before examining the shapes which the Old Things assume in the Maltese "fairy story," it may be well to examine the nature of the stories themselves. They are, like our own tales, an essential part of the national culture; but they differ from such classics as Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Bears, and The Arabian Nights. These latter belong to a literature. [178] The Maltese folk-tale is part of an oral tradition, ever changing as each succeeding generation has added its touch of contemporary colour and disguised some part of the original sense. Of the literature of the early Maltese, if, indeed, they possessed a literature, no trace remains. Thanks to some few patriots like Father Magri, collections of folk-tales in the vernacular have been made, and there has lately grown up some sort of Maltese literature. It is from collections such as Father Magri's that the literate peasant reads to the family.

[177] The educated Maltese are all too ready to embrace a foreign culture, partly from necessity it is true, but also, because expediency has persuaded them that their own tongue, their own national culture, and their own folklore belong to "the lower orders." So for centuries the remnants of what may well be the oldest civilization in the West—linked with the lost Atlantis and with the dawn of human thought—have been left to peasants and to servants. These lowly folk have stubbornly maintained some life amongst embers which may yet be fanned into a bright flame.

The absence of a literature has one advantage. The folk-tales of a literature become standardized. They are, for that reason, no true mirror of the minds of a people. The people "grow up" but the story remains. "Once upon a time" means distinctly "a very long time ago"; but the *D'erba*—"on a time"—with which every Maltese story commences, might well be used equally of something which happened yesterday, last week, or in the days of King Suleiman. So stories which were once fraught with a religious significance have been

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the relatives and the staining of the doors. Provision was made for the deceased's comfort in the other life by the breaking of his pottery—thus releasing the *manes* to accompany him in death. 764 174

The wake was a death feast originally designed to provide a sort of communion with the departed. Similarly, the cutting of the mourner's hair was intended to furnish a ritual link with the dead. Primitive tribes express the same idea in cannibalism and in funeral mutilations. [302]

The cutting of the animals' tails was very probably a version of the sacrifice in expiation of the dead man's sins. 765

> ". . . Then they brought out a splendid white horse, and the priest cut some hair from its mane and tail and burned it on the altar, shouting 'A sacrifice!' . . . 'I saw poor Weland's face through the smoke, and I couldn't help laughing . . .' says Puck." [1]

Based on fear, as these "ancient fictions" were, they yet hid certain eternal truths.

The Old Things, with their complicated rituals, their theologies of terror, served their turn in leading mankind some distance on his upward march. Nowhere is their vague disembodied presence more felt than in Malta's rapidly dwindling countryside, where every stone may well have housed one of their altars. Not all of the Old Things were evil. The good ones have been adopted by Mother Church; but there remain those restless, evil ones who have never bowed down to the Nazarene. They hide in the shadows, angry and resentful. 771 178

THE HOUR OF THE OLD THINGS

Let us go out, at the third or fourth hour after midnight. Away from the clamorous ballrooms of the cramped city of 788 178

[1] *Puck of Pook's Hill.*

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

788
•178

palaces and "prairie oysters." Out into the still, shadowed villages. Not those which fringe the military roads, but those lying in quiet hollows, away from the smell of petrol.

Let us sit for a while on some low wall and be silent.

It will seem that all the world sleeps. Only the darkness beneath walls and in windows and deep-cut doorways will be astir with a ghostly wakefulness. We shall see the little, sleeping houses and the quiet fields, stretching out in gentle waves of purple shadow and moonlit stone. There will be a wayside shrine, with an oil lamp burning fitfully in the light wind that heralds "Dawn's left hand." The sculptured saint will be deep in shadow save for the halo of yellow light painting strange meaning on the graven face, now smiling, now troubled.

Without warning the silence will be riven by the great shout of Musta's bell—like the voice of some titanic muezzin, calling from the minaret of heaven. The voices of all the bells will call, then, to each other. Some deep, manly baritones. Some high-pitched, boyish trebles. Some sweet and womanly, others cracked and querulous like the shrill chatter of crones.

The darkness will seem to stir ominously. The votive flame will flicker madly and die almost away. The protecting ox-horns above dim windows will seem to be shaken by an unseen hand. At last the bells will be silent, but there is no more stillness. All about us, from within every squat dwelling, there comes a murmuring—eerie, guttural, rising and falling in unfamiliar cadence—the voices of the peasants praying.

[776]

It is "The Hour of the Departed," when every uneasy soul, every wandering sprite and *hares* is free to be abroad; when every devout peasant stirs restlessly at the sound of the bells, wakes and prays that the Restless Ones may be granted peace and that the Evil Ones be kept at bay.

The Old Things are awake. In every patch of darkness

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

they are lurking—Baal, Mithra, Astarte, and all their kind. 788
The very stones beneath us seem to move and groan at the 178●
memory of ancient power.

We are brave sceptics in the daylight and in the lamplit city. We shall not stand up here in this, Their Hour, and scoff at the Old Things.

[pp. 141-150 not processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

rocky surfaces of the island, the tram-lines of neolithic man; and he will notice, if he is observant, that the dimensions of the flat two-wheeled carts which, with their gaily caparisoned little ponies or donkeys, are the traditional vehicle of the Maltese countryman of to-day correspond almost exactly with those of the carts of his neolithic predecessor, as deduced from the width of these ancient tracks. If he is interested in strange animals that still survive but must be a living link with hoary antiquity, he can study on the picturesque, uninhabited islet of Filfla, now used only as a target for gun practice, a remarkable lizard of the darkest green spotted with red (*Lacerta muralis* var. *filfolensis*), which occurs nowhere else in the world but on this tiny and diminishing spit of rock.

The dominant architectural notes of the Maltese Islands are megalithic and Baroque, and the gamut thus established can scarcely be called a narrow one. So far as works of art are concerned, the Museum in Valetta, housed before World War II in the Auberge d'Italie and since 1958 in that of Provence, contains a scientifically arranged exhibition of Stone Age culture unrivalled in any other country. This collection, whose most bizarre items are the astonishing fat female deities characteristic of Maltese neolithic sculpture, was organized in chronological sequence by the Museum's late learned Director, Sir Themistocles Zammit, who made a second international reputation in the field of Maltese archæology and excavation after having made an earlier one in medical research in connexion with undulant, or Malta, fever.

But the visitor is not obliged to study the activities of these remote peoples solely in museums. If he wishes to see how the distant forbears of the present population cultivated their land he has only to watch the Maltese farmer of to-day ploughing his field; if he is a student of cultural survivals he will note the eye of Osiris still painted on the bows of Malta's sturdy little schooners and characteristic "Gozo boats." If

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1970-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

346
178 As regards the ecclesiastical buildings, it is permissible to regret the disappearance of all but one or two—the most notable survivor is Zejtun's "Old Parish Church" of S. Gregory—of the modest mediæval village churches, swept away to make room for the spacious, florid Baroque shrines that now raise their towers and domes high above the flat roofs of the casals. But we stand amazed at the architectural effort and achievement of the Knights in Malta in the days of their Order's greatness. Justly could they have said with Wren, "*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*"

186

Arms of G. M. de L'Isle Adam above the Burial-place of his Entrails in Ta Ġiesu Church, Rabat

[pp. 57-64 not processed. Plates facing pp. 64 and 65 have been processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

795 by one, as the names of their parishes are called out, advance
659 to the Governor's throne and present to him a large and
796 heavy wax candle, generally embellished with painted decorations.

This Candlemas ceremony has been maintained uninterruptedly from the days when the State was the Order of S. John; and the Governor takes this occasion, as did his predecessors the Grand Masters, to address the assembly on the problems of the day, with particular emphasis on the manner in which Church and State can best co-operate for the benefit of the people. It gives the Governor of Malta the same sort of opportunity, *mutatis mutandis*, to make public pronouncements on matters of policy as the British Prime Minister is given at the Lord Mayor's Banquet. A collation brings this happy and useful function to a close.

Here it may be added that the Governor retains, as the successor of the Grand Masters, certain ecclesiastical patronage, such as the nomination to the post of Dean of the Cathedral Chapter of Malta and the right of presentation to various benefices. A survival of another sort from the days of the Knights is the religious corporation known as the Collegiate Church of S. Paul's Grotto at Rabat, whose Canons still wear at their ceremonies the habit, *stolone* and cross of the Order.

241 The principal industry of the Maltese islands is agriculture,
433 and the Maltese, despite the stony nature of their land, are skilful and industrious farmers with a wonderful knack of extracting the utmost from the soil, despite methods necessarily somewhat primitive since their fields are too small for modern agricultural machinery. Maltese potatoes and Maltese oranges have a high reputation. Vegetables are good, especially tomatoes; wheat does well where there
[439] is room to grow it. But the islands can produce only a fraction of their annual consumption of cereals, and much
251 has therefore to be imported from outside. Among the most
178 familiar features surviving from the era of the Knights are

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the underground granaries, shaped like vast jars, beneath the open space between Valetta and its suburb of Floriana and beneath a few other places, sealed with round stone lids and still in use for conserving Malta's stocks of imported grain.

There are other links in Malta with the rule of the Order of S. John. There survives, for example, from the days of the Grand Masters an official known as the Consul for Goldsmiths and Silversmiths, who is the appraiser of the Government and impresses on Maltese silver its own hall-mark, the Maltese Cross, and on gold the crown or the Maltese shield. The Consul's office is housed on the ground-floor of the Monte di Pietà building in Merchants' Street. Opposite to it is the handsome Public Registry, with a tablet commemorating its reconstruction by Grand Master Zondadari. As if to compensate for the defacement by the French Revolutionaries of the Sienese Grand Master's escutcheon, his inscription was subsequently surmounted by a bust of George III, topped by the Royal Arms of that day.

In connexion with the Consul for Goldsmiths and Silversmiths it may be mentioned that the coinage of the Order remained legal tender in Malta until 1886, when by a Government Notice there were called in all coins of "the late Government of the Order of S. John of Jerusalem."[1] The principal denominations of the Maltese coinage were the scudo, the tari, the carlino and the grano or grain, which in Maltese were called *skut*, *rbighi*, *karlin* and *habba*; and not only the country people but all Maltese use to this day the old names to denote certain values in our modern coinage. Thus 2½*d.* is described as *tliet karlinijet* (three carlini); half a crown as *tmintax rbighi*, meaning eighteen tari; 1*s.* 3*d.* is invariably *disa' rbghajja*—that is, nine tari.

Malta has no longer a separate coinage of its own, but small bronze coins of one-third of a farthing, still known locally as grains, were struck at the London Mint for use in

[1] The standard work on this interesting coinage is Canon Calleja Schembri's *Coins and Medals of the Knights of Malta* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, and edn., 1910).

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Malta in the reigns of all the British sovereigns who have ruled in Malta from George IV to George V inclusive.

Let this chapter end with another survival, perhaps the most ubiquitous of all, although its origin antedates the arrival of the Knights by more than four hundred years. It is the red-and-white Maltese flag which is flown throughout the islands side by side with the Union Jack. Long-established tradition has it that the red and white were the colours of the Norman House of Hauteville, and that the flag and the corresponding arms are one of the legacies of Roger de Hauteville, Count of Sicily, Lord of Malta, to this smallest of his dominions. When, between the World Wars, it was suggested to Malta by the English College of Arms that the Colony should regularize its arms by formally recording them at the College, Malta replied that it had borne those arms for nearly three centuries before the foundation of the College by Richard III.

The position was ultimately adjusted with the College in 1943, when Malta's coat-of-arms received the honourable augmentation of the George Cross.

Malta Government Hall-marks for Gold and Silver